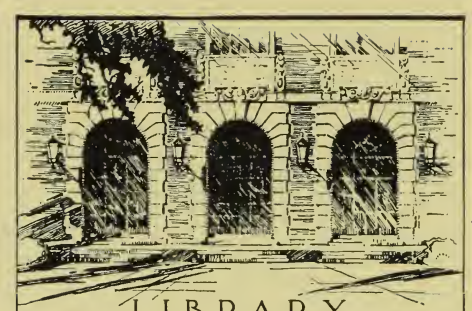
The NAUVOO TEMPLE

E. CECIL McGAVIN



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THE NAUVOO TEMPLE

by

E. Cecil McGavin

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PREFACE

As Mormon temples continue to multiply in the land, and the spirit of Elijah finds sanctuary in thousands of human hearts, and the Church is held in such high esteem by the people of the world, let us recall the adversity and opposition that attended the building of our first two temples.

There was a time when even our temples were regarded by the enemy as his to possess and occupy, to use in any worldly manner he might choose. There was a long season when the Saints sowed and the enemy reaped the harvest of their planting, a time when our temples were subject to the whims of the wicked and the presence of the ungodly.

Isaiah spoke of the blessed day when the righteous would enjoy the labor of their own workmanship and reap the harvest of their own planting:

> And they shall build houses and inhabit them; And they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
>
> They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat: for as the days of a tree, are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.—Isaiah 65:21-22.

At the dawn of the golden age of temple building this promise was not for the Saints to enjoy. The enemy seemed pledged to plague them, violating the sacred sanctuaries more then the money changers and mercenary merchants had done with the temple in Jerusalem.

A visitor from England, Richard F. Burton, spent a few weeks in Utah during pioneer days. He later wrote a book about his visit in "The City of the Saints," in which he related that the "Gentiles" had told him that they would wait until the temple was finished, then they would take possession of it and use it as a railroad station or the state capitol building.

Gone are the days when the enemy lies in wait to take possession of our chapels or temples, converting them to their

own wicked purpose. This fact should be appreciated more as we recall the struggles, sacrifices, and hardships of building our first two temples, only to see them fall into unclean hands after the builders were expelled from the land.

While the Kirtland Temple was in the hand of the enemy, they used it as a barn, sheltering their cows in the basement room, while they filled the ground floor room with sheep, keeping their animals in the temple during the winter months.

After the exodus from Nauvoo the mobbers lived in the beautiful new temple in the deserted city. They carried into it cots and beds, kegs of whisky, and supplies of food, making the temple the rendezvous of the ungodly. During the night they played cards and other games of chance, cursing and profaning as they hurled empty whisky bottles against the beautiful scenery recently painted on the smooth plastered walls.

Once a flash of lightning struck the belfry, leaving a deep scar as a token of its wrath at the defilement of the building that was built for God. Finally a fiend was hired to set the building on fire, lest it tempt its builders to return to the deserted city.

Almost 6,000 of the Saints received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple before they left the city and pushed into the wilderness. The story of the Nauvoo Temple is typical of the spirit of the early members of the church — their trials and hardships, their integrity and devotion.

As the fire consumed the last splinter of woodwork in the temple it did not consume the spirit of Elijah that resided in the hearts and homes of the Saints. From the smoking embers that cluttered the stone oxen in the font room arose dreams and desires to build other temples in a distant land where the enemy would not be able to defile or destroy the workmanship of the hands of the temple builders.

Hark to the tale of the building of the Nauvoo Temple, the Pentecostal season of rejoicing and blessing that accompanied its building, the pathos and heartbreak that smote the hearts of its builders after it fell into unclean hands!

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Chapter 1

THE NAUVOO TEMPLE AUTHORIZED BY REVELATION

Soon after the virgin city began to spread above the bogs of Commerce, and the spirit of gathering found willing disciples in many foreign lands, the time was ripe for the building of a temple in the new city of the Saints within the fond embrace of the Father of Waters. The house of the Lord in Kirtland was but a pioneer in the field of temple building, a suitable sanctuary in which the angels from heaven could come and restore the keys that would prepare the way for the full endowment and the administration of all the saving ordinances that belong to the Lord's house. The temple in Kirtland was not equipped to administer the full and complete endowment as the Lord intended it should eventually be given. In fact, there was no baptism font in the first temple.

The year of 1841 blew in on a blast of snow and ice, but that historic year had scarcely dawned until the Prophet Joseph Smith received one of the greatest revelations that had been given to him. Among other important things this revelation authorized the building of the Nauvoo Temple.

Since the building of the temple in Kirtland, the coming of Elijah with the keys of the sealing power of the priesthood, and the translation of the book of Abraham, the Prophet's mind had been deeply concerned about this important subject.

In the autumn of 1840 the Prophet issued a proclamation or epistle "to the Saints scattered abroad," in which he wrote these lines which show his interest in the subject of temple building at that early date:

> It will be necessary for the Saints to hearken to counsel and turn their attention to the Church, the establishment of the Kingdom, and lay aside every selfish principle, everything low and groveling; and stand forward in the cause of truth, and assist to the utmost of their power,

those to whom has been given the pattern and design. Like those who held up the hands of Moses, so let us hold up the hands of those who are appointed to direct the affairs of the Kingdom, so that they may be strengthened, and be enabled to prosecute their great designs, and be instrumental in effecting the great work of the last days.

Believing the time has now come, when it is necessary to erect a house of prayer, a house of order, a house for the worship of our God, where the ordinances can be attended to agreeably to His divine will, in this region of the country — to accomplish which, considerable exertion must be made, and means will be required — and as the work must be hastened in righteousness, it behooves the Saints to weigh the importance of these things, in their minds, in all their bearings, and then take such steps as are necessary to carry them into operation; and arming themselves with courage, resolve to do all they can, and feel themselves as much interested as though the whole labor depended on themselves alone. By so doing they will emulate the glorious deeds of the fathers, and secure the blessings of heaven upon themselves and their posterity to the latest generation. . . .

Here, then, beloved brethren, is a work to engage in worthy of archangels — a work which will cast into the shade the things which have been heretofore accomplished; a work which kings and prophets and righteous men in former ages have sought, expected, and earnestly desired to see, but died without the sight; and well will it be for those who shall aid in carrying into effect the mighty operations of Jehovah.[1]

This document discloses the intense interest the Prophet had in this subject at that early time, and how he sought to prepare the minds of the Saints for the advice and information he expected to be giving to them in the future. He had surely spent much time in prayerful meditation about this absorbing question. His mind was ripe and ready for further revelation on the subject. The clock of destiny had struck the fateful hour — January 19, 1841. This marvelous revelation stressed the following regarding the temple that was to be built in the thriving city of Nauvoo:

And again, verily I say unto you, let all my saints come from afar.

And send ye swift messengers, yea, chosen messengers, and say unto them: Come ye, with all your gold, and your silver, and your precious

[1] *Documentary History of the Church*, IV, 186-7.

stones, and with all your antiquities; and with all who have knowledge of antiquities, that will come, may come, and bring the box-tree, and the fir-tree, and the pine-tree, together with all the precious trees of the earth;

And with iron, with copper, and with brass, and with zinc, and with all your precious things of the earth; and build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein.

For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.

For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—

For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me.

But I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me; and I grant unto you a sufficient time to build a house unto me; and during this time your baptisms shall be acceptable unto me.

But behold, at the end of this appointment your baptisms for your dead shall not be acceptable unto me; and if you do not these things at the end of the appointment ye shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God.

For verily I say unto you, that after you have had sufficient time to build a house to me, wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world, your baptisms for your dead cannot be acceptable unto me;

For therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory.

And after this time, your baptisms for the dead, by those who are scattered abroad, are not acceptable unto me, saith the Lord.

For it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for your dead.

And again, verily I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?

For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was.

Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your

oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipals, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name.

And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.

And I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house, and the priesthood thereof, and the place whereon it shall be built.

And ye shall build it on the place where you have contemplated building it, for that is the spot which I have chosen for you to build it.

If ye labor with all your might, I will consecrate that spot that it shall be made holy.

And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest, because they pollute mine holy grounds, and mine holy ordinances, and charters, and my holy words which I give unto them.

And it shall come to pass that if you build a house unto my name, and do not do the things that I say, I will not perform the oath which I make unto you, neither fulfil the promises which ye expect at my hands, saith the Lord.

For instead of blessings, ye, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments upon your own heads, by your follies, and by all your abominations, which you practise before me, saith the Lord.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

And the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God.

Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom

I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name, in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God.

And I will answer judgment, wrath, and indignation, wailing, and anguish, and gnashing of teeth upon their heads, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord your God.

And this I make an example unto you, for your consolation concerning all those who have been commanded to do a work and have been hindered by the hands of their enemies, and by oppression, saith the Lord your God.

For I am the Lord your God, and will save all those of your brethren who have been pure in heart, and have been slain in the land of Missouri, saith the Lord.

And again, verily I say unto you, I command you again to build a house to my name, even in this place, that you may prove yourselves unto me that ye are faithful in all things whatsoever I command you, that I may bless you, and crown you with honor, immortality, and eternal life.[2]

The Prophet and his colleagues were so well prepared for this revelation that no time was lost in commencing the worthy project. The meager introduction they had received in Kirtland whetted their appetites for more. As the manuscript of the book of Abraham was being translated, further light and knowledge on this vital subject were revealed to the Prophet's inquiring mind as frequent mention was made of the holy temple and certain information that was to become available there, and nowhere else.

Through the long and bitter months that the Prophet was subjected to abuse and persecution in Missouri, and the two years he had spent laying the foundations in Nauvoo, his eager mind had spent much time in prayerful meditation on this absorbing question. He was ripe and ready and eager for further light and divine instruction on this subject. He likely regarded this as one of the greatest revelations he had received because of the opportunity it afforded the Saints to receive divine bless-

[2]Doctrine and Covenants, 124:25-55.

ings that had been withheld from all previous people on the earth.

At the April conference of the Church just two and one-half months after this revelation was received, the cornerstones of the temple were laid, and the work was ready to go forward as planned. The outstanding feature of that conference was a discussion of the temple building, and the beginning of the Nauvoo Temple. During the conference the revelation authorizing the house of the Lord was read to the congregation.

Soon after the plans were drawn up for the new building, the architect, William Weeks, had an interview with the Prophet regarding the oval windows to be placed above the first story windows. The architect insisted that the oval windows should not be provided for, since there was no room for them. He was instructed to carry out the original plan. "I wish you to carry out my designs," he was advised, "I have seen in vision the splendid appearance of that building illuminated, and will have it built according to the pattern shown me."

Just as President Brigham Young beheld the Salt Lake Temple in vision a few days after his arrival in the Great Basin, so did Joseph Smith witness the Nauvoo Temple before they started to lay the foundations of that beautiful building.

Soon after the revelation was received, groups were organized and plans made for getting the work started immediately. Large companies of men were to be sent to the forests in Wisconsin Territory, where they would purchase and erect sawmills and get the logging crews getting out the choice pine trees to be sawed into lumber for the temple, the Nauvoo House, and hundreds of private dwellings to be erected in the young city.

Following the conference, the First Presidency wrote a special epistle to be sent to the Saints abroad, in which it was said of this popular theme:

> From what we now witness, we are led to look forward with pleasing anticipation to the future, and soon expect to see the thousands of Israel flocking to this region in obedience to the heavenly command; numerous inhabitants — Saints — thickly studding the flowery and wide-spread

prairies of Illinois; temples for the worship of our God erecting in various parts, and great peace resting upon Israel.

We would call the attention of the Saints more particularly to the building of the temple, for on its speedy erection great blessings depend. The zeal which is manifested by the Saints in this city is, indeed, praiseworthy, and, we hope will be imitated by the Saints in the various stakes and branches of the Church, and that those who cannot contribute labor will bring their gold and their silver, their brass and their iron, with the pine tree, and box tree, to beautify the same.[3]

Another epistle from the First Presidency said of this theme of temple building:

The Temple of the Lord is in process of erection here, where the Saints will come to worship the God of their fathers according to the order of His house and the powers of the Holy Priesthood, and will be so constructed as to enable all the functions of the Priesthood to be duly exercised, and where instructions from the Most High will be received, and from this place go forth to distant lands. Let us then concentrate all our powers, under the *magna charta* granted by the Illinois legislature, at the "City of Nauvoo" and surrounding country, and strive to emulate the action of the ancient covenant fathers and patriarchs, in those things which are of such vast importance to this and every succeeding generation. . . .

In order to erect the Temple of the Lord, great exertions will be required on the part of the Saints, so that they may build a house which shall be accepted by the Almighty, and in which His power and glory shall be manifested. Therefore, let those who can freely make a sacrifice of their time, their talents, and their property, for the prosperity of the kingdom, and for the love they have to the cause of truth, bid adieu to their homes and pleasant places of abode, and unite with us in the great work of the last days, and share in the tribulation, that they may ultimately share in the glory and triumph.[4]

In the months that followed, the Prophet wrote and spoke at length on the subject of the temple and the ordinances that would be administered in the sacred building. Many epistles were sent abroad to tell the Saints in foreign lands about the

[3]*Documentary History of the Church*, IV, 338-9.
[4]*Ibid.*, IV, 269, 273.

temple, while the Church newspaper carried many articles on the popular subject.

In the October conference the Prophet spoke at length on the subject of baptism for the dead, explaining that those who took part in that vicarious service became saviors on Mount Zion. "The doctrine was the burden of the scriptures," he explained, "those Saints who neglect it, in behalf of their dead relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation."

At this conference he made the surprising announcement that "there shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord's House."

By this time the interest in the subject had become widespread, and hundreds in the city were anxious to have the work done in behalf of their departed kindred. The interest was so great that it would not be long until a font could be constructed within the temple enclosure and the work continued there. A company of skilled workmen began at once to construct a font room in the basement of the temple where baptisms could be performed for their dead kindred long before the temple was completed.

At the close of the October conference an epistle from the twelve carried the news about the growing city, and, above all, the temple on the hill. The temple was regarded as the worthy project that would pour out the spirit of gathering upon the scattered Saints and fill them with a desire to hasten to Nauvoo where they could assist more fully in building the Lord's house and be among the first to share its mighty blessings when they were available. It was the heaven-inspired project that would unite the Saints as nothing else had ever united them. In common they shared the knowledge of the restoration of the priesthood by heavenly messengers; they all gloried in the many glorious features of the restoration; but here was a precious program that would bind the hearts of the Saints in a worthy project just as surely as the spirit of Elijah would bind the hearts of the fathers to their children. Regarding this subject it was

said in the special proclamation that left Nauvoo soon after the October conference was ended:

Is it possible that we labor in vain and toil for nought, and that we shall be disappointed at the last? No! We know assuredly that the set time to favor Zion has come, and her sons and daughters shall rejoice in her glory. The time has come when the great Jehovah would have a resting place on earth, a habitation for His chosen where His law shall be revealed, and His servants be endowed from on high, to bring together the honest in heart from the four winds; where the Saints may enter the baptismal font for their dead relatives, so that they may be judged according to men in the flesh, and live according to God in the spirit, and come forth in the celestial kingdom; a place over which the heavenly messengers may watch and trouble the waters as in days of old, so that when the sick are put therein, they shall be made whole: a place wherein all the ordinances shall be made manifest, and the Saints shall unite in the songs of Zion, even praise, thanksgiving and hallelujahs to God and the Lamb, that He has wrought out their deliverance, and bound Satan fast in chains.

What then shall we do? Let us all arise, and with one united and mighty exertion, by the strength of Israel's God, oppose the powers of darkness, and every being and principle that may rise up against us and complete the work already commenced.[5]

An editorial in the church newspaper said of the Prophet's sermon on this subject:

President Smith gave instructions on the doctrine of baptism for the dead, which was listened to with intense interest by the large assembly. The speaker presented baptism for the dead as the only way that men can appear as saviors on Mount Zion. . . . There is a way to release the spirits of the dead; that is by the authority of the priesthood — by binding and loosing on earth. . . . This doctrine, he said, presented in a clear light the wisdom and mercy of God, in preparing an ordinance for the salvation of the dead, being baptized by proxy. Those Saints who neglect it, in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation.[6]

On November 8, 1841 the temporary font was dedicated.

[5] *Ibid.*, IV, 437.
[6] *Times and Seasons*, II, 577.

The small font room was situated in the center of the basement, directly under the main hall of the temple. The font was constructed of pine timber, tongued and grooved and oval-shaped. The room was sixteen feet long and twelve feet wide. The ceiling was seven feet above the floor. The soft pine timber was beautifully carved with ornamental designs. A flight of stairs at the north and south sides led down into the font, guarded by a hand railing.

The wooden font rested upon the backs of the twelve oxen, four on each side and two on each end, their heads, shoulders, and forelegs projecting out from under the font. They were carved from pine planks, glued together. The most beautiful five-year-old steer in the country was used as a model for the oxen beneath the font. Even the horns were fashioned after the most perfect horn that could be found.

The oxen and the ornamental mouldings for the font room were carved by Elijah Fordham, eight months being required to complete the labor. A well had been dug thirty feet deep in the east end of the basement to supply water for the font. This room was intended to be temporary, as a more durable and beautiful one would replace it as the temple neared completion.

The first baptisms for the dead in the new font were performed on the twenty-first of November. Elders Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Heber C. Kimball baptized about forty persons. They were then confirmed by Elders Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, and George A. Smith. And thus was the sacred rite of baptism for the dead commenced in the Nauvoo Temple.

The building of the temple and the Nauvoo House was an expensive undertaking, and the Saints from far and near were encouraged to contribute generously to the project. A special epistle, written one week after the font room was dedicated, assured the Saints that these two buildings must be completed "to secure the salvation of the church in the last days." Regarding the purpose of the building, it was further said:

> For God requires of his Saints to build Him a house wherein His

servants may be instructed, and endowed with power from on high, to prepare them to go forth among the nations, and proclaim the fulness of the Gospel for the last time, and build up the law, and seal up the testimony, leaving this generation without excuse, and the earth prepared for the judgments which will follow.

The set time to favor the stakes of Zion is at hand, and soon the kings and the queens, the princes and the nobles, the rich and the honorable of the earth will come up hither to visit the Temple of our God, and to inquire concerning His strange work. . . .

Every Saint on earth is equally interested in these things, and all are under equal obligations to do all in their power to complete the buildings by their faith, and by their prayers, with their thousands and their mites.[7]

At the Christmas season in 1841 the Saints received a copy of a special proclamation sent out by the twelve, in which much was said about the subject of temple work. It contained these striking paragraphs:

The children of Israel were commanded to build a house in the land of promise; and so are the Saints of the last days, as you will see in the revelation given to Joseph the Seer, January 19, 1841, wherein those ordinances may be revealed which have been hid for ages, even their anointings and washings, and baptisms for the dead; wherein they may meet in solemn assemblies for their memorials, sacrifices, and oracles in their most holy places; and wherein they may receive conversations and statutes and judgments, from the beginning of the revelations and foundations of Zion and the glory and honor and adornment of all her municipals through the medium which God has ordained. . . .

Brethren, you have as great an interest at stake in this thing as we have, but as our Master, even the Master-builder of the Temple, whose throne is on high, has seen fit to constitute us stewards in some parts of His household, we feel it important for us to see to it our Master is not defrauded, and especially by those who have pledged their word, their time, their talents, to His services; and we hope this gentle hint will suffice, that we may not be compelled to publish the names of those referred to.[8]

As this historic year drew to a close, hundreds of baptisms

[7] *Documentary History of the Church*, IV, 449-450.
[8] *Ibid.*, IV, 472-4.

for the dead had been performed in the font room, and the Saints were united in the cause of completing the temple as soon as possible. The spirit of Elijah was poured out upon the Saints at Nauvoo and the ones scattered abroad. Missionaries returning home and special collection agents were bringing contributions from far and near for the temple fund and the building of the Nauvoo House.

This year must have been the most glorious one Joseph Smith had experienced. The mob spirit that had plagued them in Ohio and Missouri had not yet risen in Illinois, and the greatest desire of his tender heart was being realized — the growing temple on the hill.

Chapter 2

THE GROWING TEMPLE ON THE HILL

The Prophet's mind lingered at length on the subject of the temple and what a blessing it would be to the members of the Church when it was finished. At the dawn of the new year, 1842, he wrote these words in his history:

> The Saints seem to be influenced by a kind and indulgent providence in their dispositions and blessed with means to rear the Temple of the Most High God, anxiously looking forth to the completion thereof as an event of the greatest importance to the Church and the world, making the Saints in Zion to rejoice, and the hypocrite and sinner to tremble. Truly this is a day long to be remembered by the Saints of the last days — a day in which the God of heaven has begun to restore the ancient order of His kingdom unto His servants and His people — a day in which all things are concurring to bring about the completion of the fulness of the Gospel, a fulness of the dispensation of dispensations, even the fulness of times; a day in which God has begun to make manifest and set in order in His Church those things which have been, and those things which the ancient prophets and wise men desired to see but died without beholding them; a day in which those things begin to be made manifest, which have been hid from before the foundation of the world, and which Jehovah has promised should be made known in His own due time unto His servants, to prepare the earth for the return of His glory, even a celestial glory, and a kingdom of Priests and kings to God and the Lamb, forever, on Mount Zion.[1]

In his private and public discussions this theme always held top priority in his mind. The *Times and Seasons,* on the first day in April carried an epistle from the twelve, encouraging the faithful to contribute faithfully to the cause of the temple. It concluded with this paragraph:

> The brethren need not suppose that this thing is of our own imagination, simply, or that the result thereof, if fully carried into execution will

[1] *Documentary History of the Church,* IV, 492.

be of doubtful character. We have been guided by the spirit of the Lord in our deliberations concerning the matter, and have been instructed by the Prophet of the Most High, even Joseph, the Seer and Revelator for the Church, whose instructions to us, are as the voice of the Lord, and whose admonitions we ever regard as true and faithful.[2]

Two weeks later the church newspaper published a two-page article about baptism for the dead and the blessings that would accrue to the Church when the temple was finished. It promised that the faithful would be "endowed to go forth with mighty power, having the same anointing, that all may go forth and have the same power."

Late in April the Prophet preached a long sermon to the members of the Relief Society, pausing to comment on this subject that was so dear to his heart. He assured them that the Church was not fully organized in its proper order and could not be until the temple was completed, where suitable places and provision would be made for the administration of the ordinances of the priesthood.

He seemed aware of the fact that his mortal days were numbered and that he would not live many more years to guide and direct the Church. Regarding this premonition that seemed to linger in his mind, he said to the sisters of the Relief Society, as it was reported in the minutes of their meeting:

That he did not know that he should have many opportunities of teaching them, as they were going to be left to themselves; they would not long have him to instruct them. . . . He spoke of delivering the keys of the priesthood to the Church, and said that the faithful members of the Relief Society should receive them in connection with their husbands. . . . For according to his prayers God had appointed him elsewhere.[3]

At the funeral of Ephraim Marks, April 9, he paused to comment on this subject:

Some have supposed that Brother Joseph could not die, but this

[2] *Times and Seasons*, III, 735.
[3] *Documentary History of the Church*, IV, 603.

is a mistake. It is true there have been times when I have had the promise of my life to accomplish such and such things; I have not at present any lease on my life. I am as liable to die as other men.

The month of May was a fruitful season of pentecostal glory which witnessed the administration of the first endowments in this dispensation. On the second day of the month a long editorial appeared in the *Times and Seasons,* from which we glean these lines:

THE TEMPLE

This noble edifice is progressing with great rapidity; strenuous exertions are being made on every hand to facilitate its erection, and materials of all kinds are in a great state of forwardness, and by next fall we expect to see the building enclosed; if not the top stone raised with "shouting of grace — grace unto it." There have been frequently, during the winter, as many as one hundred hands quarrying rock, while at the same time multitudes of others have been engaged in hauling, and in other kinds of labor.

A company was formed last fall to go up to the pine country to purchase mills, and prepare and saw lumber for the Temple and the Nauvoo House, and the reports from them are very favorable. Another company has started, this last week, to take their place and to relieve those that are already there. On their return they are to bring a very large raft of lumber, for the use of the above-named houses.

While the busy multitudes have thus been engaged in their several vocations, performing their daily labor, and working one-tenth of their time, others have not been less forward in their tithings and consecrations for the same great object. Never since the foundation of the Church was laid, have we seen manifested a greater willingness to comply with the requisitions of Jehovah, a more ardent desire to do the will of God, more strenuous exertions used, or greater sacrifices made than there have been since the Lord said, "Let the Temple be built by the tithing of my people."

It seemed as though the spirit of enterprise, philanthropy, and obedience rested simultaneously upon old and young, and brethren and sisters, boys and girls, and even strangers, who were not in the Church, united with an unprecedented liberality in the accomplishment of this great work; nor could the widow, in many instances, be prevented, out of her scant pittance from throwing in her two mites. . . .

The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; but they died without the sight; we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the latter-day glory, "the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God will gather together all things that are in heaven, and all things that are upon the earth. . . ."

The blessings of the Most High will rest upon our tabernacles, and our name will be handed down to future ages; our children will rise up and call us blessed; and generations yet unborn will dwell with peculiar delight upon the scenes that we have passed through, the privations that we have endured; the untiring zeal that we have manifested; the all but insurmountable difficulties that we have overcome in laying the foundation of a work that brought about the glory and blessing which they will realize; a work that God and angels have contemplated with delight for generations past; that fired the souls of the ancient patriarchs and prophets; a work that is destined to bring about the destruction of darkness, the renovation of the earth, the glory of God, and the salvation of the human family.[4]

On the first day of May at the Sabbath service in the grove near the temple, the Prophet preached to the throngs that always attended the meeting during the pleasant weather. In his journal he summarized his remarks thus:

I preached in the grove, on the keys of the kingdom, charity, etc. The keys are certain signs and words by which false spirits may be detected from true, which cannot be revealed to the Elders till the Temple is completed. The rich can only get them in the Temple, the poor may get them on the mountain top as did Moses. The rich cannot be saved without charity, giving to feed the poor when and how God requires, as well as building. There are signs in heaven, earth and hell; the Elders must know them all, and to be endowed with power, to finish their work and prevent imposition. The devil knows many signs, but he does not know the sign of the Son of Man, or Jesus. No one can truly say he knows God until he has handled something, and this can only be in the holiest of holies.[5]

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[4]*Ibid.*, IV, 608-610.
[5]*Ibid.*, IV, 608.

The fourth day of May, 1842 was a spiritual highlight in the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He had spoken much about becoming saviors on Mount Zion, but on this historic day he ascended the spiritual heights of the Mount of Transfiguration, giving the temple endowment to a few of the leading brethren of the Church. The temple was not one story high, so this initial endowment could not have been given within that sacred edifice where it rightly belonged. The small font room was being used for baptisms for the dead, so this first endowment could not have been given in that small room. The room selected for this great honor was the Prophet's office above his new store down by the river.

The temple was the proper place for the endowment to be given, but the Prophet seems to have known that his life would be taken long before the temple was completed. He seemed determined to administer these sacred ceremonies in person, so that the leaders of the Church would know exactly how to proceed when the temple was completed and he was no longer with them to instruct them in that important labor.

The following brethren were invited to attend that historic meeting in his large office: Hyrum Smith, Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young, Willard Richards, Newel K. Whitney, James Adams, and George Miller. In his history he wrote this humble account of the spiritual proceedings of the day:

> . . . Instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fulness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of Eloheim in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days.
>
> And the communications I made to this council were of things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritually minded. And there was nothing made known to these men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and

a proper place is prepared to communicate them, even to the weakest of the Saints. Therefore, let the Saints be diligent in building the Temple, and all houses which they have been, or shall hereafter be commanded of God to build; and wait their time with patience in all meekness, faith, perseverance unto the end, knowing assuredly that all these things referred to in this council are always governed by the principle of revelation.[6]

The next day most of these brethren met in the same room. The Prophet wrote of the occasion, "myself and Brother Hyrum received in turn from the others, the same that I had communicated to them the day previous."

Subsequently, the Prophet called other leading brethren of the Church into solemn council and administered the endowment to them. Regarding these secret sessions with the Prophet, many witnesses have testified:

Elder Orson Hyde wrote of the endowment the Prophet gave to the twelve a year before his death:

> Before I went East on the 4th of April, last, we were in council with Brother Joseph almost every day for weeks. Says Brother Joseph, in one of those councils, "There is something going to happen; I don't know what it is, but the Lord bids me to hasten and give you your endowment before the temple is finished." He conducted us through every ordinance of the holy priesthood, and when he had gone through with all the ordinances he rejoiced very much, and says, "now if they kill me you have got all the keys, and all the ordinances, and you can confer them upon others, and the hosts of Satan will not be able to tear down the kingdom as fast as you will be able to build it up; and now," says he, "on your shoulders will rest the responsibility of leading this people, for the Lord is going to let me rest a while." Now why did he say to the twelve "on your shoulders will this responsibility rest," why did he not mention Brother Hyrum? The spirit knew that Hyrum would be taken with him, and hence he did not mention his name; Elder Rigdon's name was not mentioned, although he was here all the time, but he did not attend our councils.[7]

[6] *Ibid.*, V, 1-2. For a full discussion of this subject see the author's book, *Mormonism and Masonry*. All the brethren who received the first endowment were members of the Masonic lodge. Judge James Adams, who knew more about Masonry than any other member of the Church, was so favorably impressed by the endowment that he gave to the Church the deeds to eleven quarter sections of land on the Illinois prairie.

[7] *Millennial Star*, V, 104.

Elder Wilford Woodruff wrote of a further endowment the Prophet gave to his brethren a short time before the martyrdom:

Has the Prophet Joseph found Elder Rigdon in his councils, when he organized the quorum of the Twelve a few months before his death, to prepare them for the endowment? And when they received their endowment, and actually received the keys of the Kingdom of God, and oracles of God, keys of revelation, and the pattern of heavenly things, and thus addressing the Twelve, exclaimed: "Upon your shoulders the kingdom rests, and you must round up your shoulders and bear it, for I have had to do it until now. But now the responsibility rests upon you. It mattereth not what becomes of me." I say, has this been the case with Elder Rigdon in any wise?[8]

Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote of the same incident:

This great and good man was led, before his death, to call the Twelve together, from time to time, and to instruct them in all things pertaining to the kingdom, ordinances, and government of God. He often observed that he was laying the foundation, but it would remain for the Twelve to complete the building. Said he, "I know not why; but for some reason I am constrained to hasten my preparations, and to confer upon the Twelve all the ordinances, keys, covenants, endowments, and sealing ordinances of the priesthood, and so set before them a pattern in all things pertaining to the sanctuary and the endowment therein."

Having done this he rejoiced exceedingly: "for," said he, "the Lord is about to lay the burden on your shoulders and let me rest awhile; and if they kill me," continued he, "the Kingdom of God will roll on, as I have now finished the work which was laid upon me, by committing to you all things for the building up of the kingdom according to the heavenly vision, and the pattern shown me from heaven." With many conversations like this, he comforted the minds of the Twelve, and prepared them for what was soon to follow.

He proceeded to confer on Elder Young, the President of the Twelve, the keys of the sealing power, as conferred in the last days by the spirit and power of Elijah, in order to seal the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers; lest the whole earth should be smitten with a curse.

This last key of the priesthood is the most sacred of all, and pertains

[8] *Ibid.*, V, 109.

exclusively to the first presidency of the church, without whose sanction, and approval or authority, no sealing blessing shall be administered pertaining to things of the resurrection and the life to come.

After giving them a very short charge to do all things according to the pattern, he quietly surrendered his liberty and his life into the hands of his blood-thirsty enemies, and all this to save the people for whom he had so long labored from threatened vengeance.[9]

President John Taylor confirmed the opinion of other members of the Council of the Twelve with these plain words:

Joseph Smith, before his death, was much exercised about the completion of the Temple in Nauvoo, and the administering of the ordinances therein. In his anxiety and for fear he should not live to see the Temple completed, he prepared a place over what was known as the brick-store — which many of you who lived in Nauvoo will recollect — where to a chosen few he administered those ordinances that we now have today associated with endowments, and that if anything should happen to him — which he evidently contemplated — he would feel that he had then fulfilled his mission, that he had conferred upon others all the keys given to him by the manifestations of the power of God.[10]

A complete record was not kept in the Prophet's history of all those who received the endowment under his personal supervision and direction, but many of the leading brethren and all of the General Authorities of the Church likely received the endowment before the Prophet's death. On December 2, 1843 he made this entry in his journal history, "Prayer-meeting from 1 to 6 p.m., in the assembly room over the store. Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, and Orson Spencer received their endowments and further instructions in the Priesthood. About thirty-five persons present."[11]

It is very possible that the wives of the General Authorities of the Church were given this great blessing under the personal direction of Joseph Smith. On the family group sheet in the Utah Genealogical Society records, the endowment date for his wife, Emma, is given as 1843, the exact date being unknown.

[9] *Ibid.*, V, 151.
[10] *Journal of Discourses*, XXV, 183.
[11] *Documentary History of the Church*, VI, 98.

A special testimony meeting was called by President Lorenzo Snow, June 24, 1894, at which Sister Bathsheba W. Smith, the widow of George A. Smith was invited to relate her experiences in Nauvoo where she received her endowment under the hands of Joseph Smith. She said that she was the only woman in the Church then living who had received that great honor under the personal supervision of the Prophet.

President Wilford Woodruff spoke at the same meeting, informing the congregation that he was the only living man who had been endowed in Nauvoo under the hands of the Prophet Joseph Smith. President Woodruff closed his remarks with these words, as reported by Eliza R. Snow:

> This then, should be recorded in the mind, and in the private journal of everyone, that President Woodruff and Sister Bathsheba W. Smith were endowed and received their blessings and sealing and anointings under the hands of the Prophet Joseph Smith. There were many more who likewise had this great privilege, but they are all dead, leaving only these two living witnesses.[12]

From the pen of an apostate has come a statement regarding the early endowments in Nauvoo under the direction of Joseph Smith. Ebenezer Robinson was the associate editor of the *Times and Seasons* when that periodical was first published. Upon the death of Don Carlos Smith, the first editor, Robinson became editor-in-chief. He subsequently left the Church, moved to Missouri where he became a faithful disciple of David Whitmer. Through the years he became thoroughly disgusted with the false claims being made by the officials of the Reorganized Church, that no temple work of any kind was ever done in Nauvoo under the direction of Joseph Smith. In 1890 he was the editor of a small magazine called *The Return,* which for a season spoke in favor of David Whitmer becoming the president of the church.

Robinson knew that the arguments advanced by the sons of the Prophet Joseph Smith were false. Furthermore, he had

[12]*The Young Woman's Journal,* August, 1894.

no interest in the Church in Utah, but he was anxious that his voice be heard on the subject, so he wrote a long article in his magazine, stating the facts as he knew them. Almost fifty years had passed away since he had witnessed these scenes of which he wrote, his memory had failed him in many particulars, and he made a few mistakes in names of people and apparel, yet it is a witness that should not be ignored, especially by those who insist that no temple work was ever done in Nauvoo:

. . . We here state a few facts which came under our personal observation. As early as 1843 a secret order was established in Nauvoo, called the HOLY ORDER, the members of which were of both sexes, in which, we were credibly informed, scenes were enacted representing the garden of Eden, and that the members of that order were provided with a peculiar under garment called a robe. "It was made in one piece. On the right breast is a square, on the left a compass, in the center a small hole, and on the knee a large hole." This was the description of that garment as given to the writer in Nauvoo, in Joseph Smith's life time. It was claimed that while they wore this "robe" no harm could befall them.

In confirmation of this idea, we quote the 2nd verse of the 113th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, Plano Edition, speaking of the Providential escape of Willard Richards, who was in the jail with Joseph and Hyrum Smith at the time they were murdered.

"John Taylor and William (Willard) Richards, two of the Twelve, were the only persons in the room at the time; the former was wounded in a savage manner with four balls, but has since recovered: the latter, through the promises of God escaped without even a hole in his robe."

It was stated that Willard Richards was the only one of the four, who had on his "robe" at the time, therefore the statement that he escaped through the promise of God, "without a hole in his robe."

President Joseph Smith attended the meetings of that "Order," which were held in the large room in the second story of his brick store building. One day in June, 1844, the "order" was in session from morning until evening. At the adjournment for dinner we saw Joseph Smith come from there, and again after dinner, he returned back to the same place, as in returning from dinner President Smith and the writer walked by ourselves, side by side in intimate conversation, but parted at the store.

Not long after parting with President Smith, wishing to speak with him we ran hastily up the stairs to call him out when to our

amazement we encountered John Taylor, one of the twelve apostles, in a long white garment, with a white turban on his head, and a drawn sword in his hand, evidently representing the "cherubim and flaming sword which was placed at the east of the garden of Eden, to guard the tree of life." He informed us Brother Joseph was in the room.

Here, we understand, and firmly believe, the ceremony originated, as practiced in the endowment house in Utah, including the signs, tokens, grips, garments, girdles and key words used therein; and that the twelve in Utah conscientiously believe in this and other matters, they are carrying out the measures of Joseph Smith, and that he gave them their endowment, and rolled the burden of the church and kingdom upon their shoulders.[13]

President Brigham Young has given this advice regarding the endowment:

Soon after, the Church, through our beloved Prophet Joseph, was commanded to build a Temple to the Most High in Kirtland, Ohio, and this was the next House of the Lord we hear of on the earth, since the days of Solomon's Temple. Joseph not only received revelation and commandment to build a Temple, but he received a pattern also, as did Moses for the Tabernacle, and Solomon for the Temple; for without a pattern, he could not know what was wanting, having never seen one, and not having experienced its use.

Without revelation, Joseph could not know what was wanting, any more than any other man, and, without commandment, the Church were too few in numbers, too weak in faith, and too poor in purse, to attempt such a mighty enterprise. But by means of all these stimulants, a mere handful of men, living on air, and a little hominy and milk, and often salt or no salt when milk could not be had; the great Prophet Joseph, in the stone quarry, quarrying rock with his own hands; and the few men in the Church following his example of obedience and diligence wherever most needed; with laborers on the walls, holding the sword in one hand to protect themselves from the mob, while they placed the stone and moved the trowel with the other, the Kirtland Temple, the second House of the Lord that we have any published record of on the earth, was so far completed as to be dedicated. And those first Elders who helped to build it, received a portion of their first endowments, or we might say more clearly, some of the first, or introductory, or initiatory ordinances, preparatory to an endowment.

The preparatory ordinances there administered, though accomplished

[13] *The Return*, II, 252.

by the ministration of angels, and the presence of the Lord Jesus, were but a faint similitude of the ordinances of the House of the Lord in their fulness; yet many, through the instigation of the devil, thought they had received all, and knew as much as God; they have apostatized, and gone to hell. But be assured, brethren, there are but few, very few of the Elders of Israel, now on earth, who know the meaning of the word endowment. To know, they must experience; and to experience, a Temple must be built.

Let me give you the definition in brief. Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.

Who has received and understands such an endowment in this assembly? You need not answer. Your voices should be few and far between, yet the keys to these endowments are among you, and thousands have received them, so that the devil, with all his aids, need not suppose he can again destroy the Holy Priesthood from the earth, by killing a few, for he cannot do it. God has set his hand, for the last time, to redeem His people, the honest in heart, and Lucifer cannot hinder Him.

Before these endowments could be given in Kirtland, the Saints had to flee before mobocracy. And, by toil and daily labor, they found places in Missouri, where they laid the corner stones of Temples, in Zion and her stakes, and then had to retreat to Illinois, to save the lives of those who could get away alive from Missouri, where fell the Apostle David W. Patten, with many like associates, and where they were imprisoned in loathsome dungeons, and fed on human flesh, Joseph and Hyrum, and many others. But before this had transpired, the Temple at Kirtland had fallen into the hands of wicked men, and by them polluted, like the Temple at Jerusalem, and consequently it was disowned by the Father and the Son.[14]

President Brigham Young frequently mentioned the possibility of administering the temple endowment in the mountains. Once in a sermon he said these words:

The Temple will be for the endowments — for the organization and instruction of the Priesthood. . . . When the Temple is built here, I want to maintain it for the use of the Priesthood. If this cannot be, I

[14] *Journal of Discourses*, II, 31-32.

would rather not see it built, but go into the mountains and administer therein the ordinances of the Holy Priesthood, which is our right and privilege. I would rather do this than to build a temple for the wicked to trample under their feet.[15]

In the autumn of 1843 President Brigham Young preached a sermon to the Saints in Boston, and he said of this subject:

If the Saints will not help, the curse of God will rest upon them. If the Temple at Nauvoo is not built, we will receive our endowments, if we have to go into the wilderness and build an altar of stone. If a man does his all, it is all God requires.[16]

There came a time when the endowment was given in the mountains. The occasion was this: Elder Addison T. Pratt had left Nauvoo for a mission in the South Pacific. In the autumn of 1848 he returned to his family in Utah. He never received any of the endowment in Nauvoo. He was soon called upon another mission to the Society Islands, but expressed a desire to receive the endowment which many of his brethren had received in Nauvoo. On July 21, 1849, President Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Erastus Snow, Charles C. Rich, and a few other brethren assembled on Ensign Peak, north of Salt Lake City, where the endowment was administered to Brother Pratt. The spot had been dedicated for the purpose. Soon after, he departed for the distant mission field.

THE THEME OF THE TEMPLE ALWAYS POPULAR WITH THE PROPHET

During the last three years of the Prophet's life he labored without ceasing in an effort to complete the temple and instruct his brethren in the ritual that would be administered in that sacred building when it was completed. In the meantime he continued to give the endowment to many of the leading brethren of the Church so they could assist in giving it to others when the temple was finished. One year after he gave the first

[15] *Ibid.*, VIII, 203.
[16] *Documentary History of the Church*, VI, 28.

features of the endowment to some of the prominent brethren on the fourth day of May, 1842, he had some of the same brethren in solemn council in the same upper room, and gave them additional information and "instructions in the priesthood of the new and everlasting covenant."[17]

A few days later he met in the same room with the same brethren "to attend to ordinances and counseling." The following day the same brethren spent many hours in "conversation, instruction, and teaching concerning the things of God."

At the Sabbath service, June 11, 1843, the Prophet spoke at length about the gathering of Israel and the building of the temple. He explained that the purpose of the gathering was that a temple might be erected where the Lord could reveal unto his people the ordinances of his holy house and the glories of his kingdom, and teach to his children the way of salvation.

He stressed the fact that it was the design of the councils in heaven before the world was created, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world. The saving ordinances of the gospel were instituted in the heavens for the salvation of the human family, and are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles. Thus Israel must be gathered and temples built wherein the ordinances, so necessary for salvation, can be administered by divine direction and approval.

To his critics he declared that baptism for the dead is clearly taught in the New Testament, "and if the doctrine is not good," he suggested, "then throw the New Testament away. In the resurrection some are raised to be angels, others are raised to become gods. These things are revealed to the most holy in a temple prepared for that purpose."[18]

One year before his martyrdom he recorded that the Saints were determined to build a thriving city, and that the temple was rising tier upon tier, presenting a stately and noble appearance.

[17] *Ibid.*, V, 409.
[18] *Ibid.*, V, 426.

An article in the Salem *Advertiser and Argus* attracted his attention, and he added it to his history:

> The Nauvoo Temple is a very singular and unique structure. It is one hundred and fifty feet in length, ninety-eight feet wide, and when finished will be one hundred and fifty feet high. It is different from anything in ancient or modern history. Everything about it is on a magnificent scale, and when finished and seen from the opposite side of the river, will present one, if not the most beautiful, chaste and noble specimens of architecture to be found in the world.
>
> We should like to be in possession of a model of this building, both on account of its great notoriety as being connected with the Mormons or Latter-day Saints' religion and also a work of art.[19]

In the spring of 1844 a special meeting was held in the grove near the temple in order to stimulate further interest in hastening the work on the temple. Hyrum Smith explained that the penny fund the women had sponsored would purchase the glass and nails that were needed, while the brethren were expected to contribute all the money necessary for the purchase of all the other supplies.

At the same meeting the Prophet spoke and, perhaps, shocked some of the delinquent brethren when he said to the vast congregation of 8,000 listeners:

> In relation to those who give in property for the temple. We want them to bring it to the proper source, and to be careful into whose hands it comes, that it may be entered into the Church books, so that those whose names are found in the Church books shall have the first claim to receive their endowments in the temple. I intend to keep the door at the dedication myself, and not a man shall pass who has not paid his bonus.[20]

On a cold Sabbath day in January, 1844, the Prophet spoke to a crowd of several thousand in the grove near the temple. With the temple in the background, rising tier upon tier, he spoke at length on the keys of Elijah. From this great masterpiece we quote these lines:

> But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building

[19] *Ibid.*, VI, 432.
[20] *Ibid.*, VI, 243.

their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfils the mission of Elijah. And I would to God that this temple was now done, that we might go into it, and go to work and improve our time, and make use of the seals while they are on earth.

The Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead, and gather together their living relatives, that they may be saved also, before the earth will be smitten, and the consumption decreed falls upon the world.

I would advise all the Saints to go to with their might and gather all their living relatives to this place, that they may be sealed and saved, that they may be prepared against the day that the destroying angel goes forth; and if the whole Church should go to with all their might to save their dead, seal their posterity, and gather their living friends, and spend none of their time in behalf of the world, they would hardly get through before night would come, when no man can work; and my only trouble at the present time is concerning ourselves, that the Saints will be divided, broken up, and scattered before we get our salvation secure; for there are so many fools in the world for the devil to operate upon, it gives him the advantage oftentimes.

The question is often asked, "Can we not be saved without going through with all those ordinances, etc.,?" I would answer, No, not the fulness of salvation. Jesus said, "There are many mansions in my Father's house, and I will go and prepare a place for you." *House* here named should have been translated kingdom; and any person who is exalted to the highest mansion has to abide a celestial law, and the whole law too.

But there has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand.[21]

In another sermon the Prophet said of the mission of Elijah:

The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of revelation, ordinances, oracles, powers, and endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God

[21] *Ibid.*, VI, 183-184.

on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the hearts of the children unto the fathers, even those who are in heaven. . . .

Now comes the point. What is this work and office of Elijah? It is one of the greatest and most important subjects that God has revealed. He should send Elijah to seal the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children. . . .

This is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection.[22]

An editorial in the *Times and Seasons*, March 15, 1844, had much to say about the building of the temple. It stressed the fact that the Saints "here of late have taken hold of the work on the temple with the zeal and energy that in no small degree excites our admiration. Their united efforts certainly speak to us that it is their determination that this spacious edifice shall be enclosed, if not finished, this season."

Again they called upon the faithful in all lands to contribute freely of their money "that the burden of the work may not rest upon a few, but proportionally upon all."

At the last conference of the Church which Hyrum Smith attended before going like a lamb to Carthage, he preached a powerful discourse in an effort to raise funds for the building:

We want 200,000 shingles, and we shall resume the work on the Temple immediately. All who have not paid their tithing, come on and do it. We want provisions, money, boards, planks, and anything that is good. We don't want any more old guns or watches. I thought some time ago that I would get up a small subscription, so that the sisters might do something. In consequence of some misunderstanding, it has not gone on as at first. It is a matter of my own; I do not ask it as a tithing. I give a privilege to anyone to pay a cent a week, or fifty cents a year. I want it next fall to buy nails and glass. It is difficult to get money. I know that a small subscription will bring more than a large one. The poor can help in this way. . . .

I have sent this subscription plan to England and the branches. . . . I wish all the Saints to have an opportunity to do something. I want

[22] *Ibid.*, VI, 251-252.

the poor with the purse of five dollars to have a chance. The widow's two mites were more in the eyes of the Lord than the purse of the rich; and the poor woman shall have a seat in the House of the Lord. . . .

I wish to have a place in that house. I intend to stimulate the brethren. I want to get the roof on this season. I want to get the windows in, in the winter, so that we may be able to dedicate the House of the Lord by this time next year, if nothing more than one room.[23]

Six weeks before the martyrdom, the Prophet spoke at length about the resurrection and the ordinances that are necessary for the salvation of the living and the dead. From this impressive sermon we quote these words:

There are mansions for those who obey a celestial law, and there are other mansions for those who come short of the law, every man in his own order. There is baptism, etc., for those to exercise who are alive, and baptism for the dead who die without the knowledge of the gospel.

I am going on in my progress for eternal life. It is not only necessary that you should be baptized for your dead, but you will have to go through all the ordinances for them, the same as you have gone through to save yourselves. There will be 144,000 saviors on Mount Zion, and with them an innumerable host that no man can number. Oh! I beseech you to go forward, go forward and make your calling and your election sure. . . .

In regard to the law of the priesthood, there should be a place where all nations shall come up from time to time to receive their endowments; and the Lord has said this shall be the place for the baptisms for the dead.[24]

When the Prophet and his brother rode away to Carthage late in June of that historic year, they had an assurance as they took a final look at the incomplete temple on the hill, that they had done all in their power to rush it to completion. They had a comforting assurance that the heaven-inspired endowment ceremony had been recorded and had also been administered to many of the brethren and some of the wives of the church leaders, so that when the enemy took their lives, the work could go forward as planned, and the temple endowment could be given in the temple under the supervision of many people who

[23] *Ibid.*, VI, 298-299.
[24] *Ibid.*, VI, 365.

had previously received it under the personal direction of the two leaders whose blood would soon be shed in Carthage.

When the missionaries and other agents were sent abroad to collect funds for the temple in the scattered branches of the Church, they were given a recommend or license for that purpose. As a sample of this authorization which prevented unauthorized persons from soliciting for that cause, we present the one that the Prophet issued to Brigham Young:

> To all the Saints and honorable men of the earth, greetings:
>
> Dear Brethren and friends: I, Joseph Smith, a servant of the Lord, and Trustee in Trust for the Temple of the Lord at Nauvoo, do hereby certify that the bearer hereof, Brigham Young, an Elder and one of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has deposited with me his bond and security, to my full satisfaction, according to the resolution of the conference, held in this city, on the 6th day of April last.
>
> He, therefore, is recommended to all Saints and honorable people, as a legal agent to collect funds for the purpose of building the Nauvoo House and Temple of the Lord, confident that he will honor this high trust, as well as ardently fulfil his commission as a messenger of peace and salvation, as one of the Lord's noble men. I can fervently say, may the Lord clear his way before him, and bless him, and bless those that obey his teachings wherever there are ears to hear and hearts to feel.

After the font was dedicated, it was in such demand for baptisms for the dead that the adult converts and the children who had reached the age of eight years were obliged to be baptized in the river during the summer months. Many baptisms were performed there early and late in the season, when the water was not comfortable, so that they would not interfere with the labor in the font room in the growing temple on the hill.

On March 20, 1842, an inclement season for river baptism, Joseph Smith baptized eighty persons. The first one to be baptized was a choice friend of the Prophet's, Lorenzo Wasson, a son of Emma Smith's sister, Elizabeth. He is the only one of her relatives ever to join the Church. After the martyrdom when Emma became a bitter enemy of the twelve, her nephew drifted out of the Church. It was utterly impossible for him

to fellowship with the leaders of the Church and remain a loyal friend to his aunt Emma, so he chose to fellowship with her.

The Prophet's secretary wrote of that baptism service when Lorenzo Wasson was baptized, "At the close of this interesting scene, the administrator lifted his hands towards heaven, and implored the blessings of God to rest upon the people. And truly the Spirit of God did rest upon the multitude, to the joy and consolation of our hearts."

During a Sabbath service in the grove near the temple it was announced that a large raft of pine lumber had just arrived at the wharf, and that a large crew of men was needed to unload and transport it to the temple. It was requested that all the men who could come from the first five wards in the city should be on hand at an early hour on the following day and devote the first three days of the week to the project, while the next five wards would furnish the labor crew for the next three days.

With an ample supply of men, wagons, oxen, and horses the labor was completed, and the large load of timber was piled near the temple. All the available carpenters were summoned to put in the temporary floor in the new building and provide seats so that they would soon be able to hold their Sabbath meetings in the temple though the walls were only a few feet high.

As the missionaries traveled abroad preaching the message of the restoration, they took delight in telling about the temple of the Lord in Nauvoo. Typical of the publicity that this worthy project received from the missionaries, and the good manner in which it was received by the public, is the following which was published in the Boston *Bee*, being a review of a sermon by Elder George J. Adams:

> Review of Mormon Lecture. Agreeable to previous appointment, on Thursday evening, January 19th (1843), Elder Adams made his appearance before an immensely crowded house to give a history of his visit to Nauvoo, the Holy City of the Saints. He commenced by quoting the words of Pilate to our Lord, viz:, "What is truth," and said he had taken a good text, and intended to give nothing but plain facts; said he was well

aware of the deep rooted prejudice that existed in the minds of many against his people, but he felt extremely happy to have an opportunity of standing before such a crowd of the enlightened citizens of Boston, in defense of the truth. . . .

He then spoke of the great Temple at Nauvoo, that is (when finished) to become the glory of the western world, which will probably be accomplished in about two years. Then came a description of the twelve oxen, carved as large as life, to be overlaid with fine gold, on which rests the baptismal font, that is used especially for baptizing those afflicted with various diseases, and also to baptize for the dead. He then gave a powerful and soul stirring and an eloquent appeal, in behalf of the doctrine of baptism for the dead. His reasoning on that subject was unanswerable. He then turned to the Bible and proved the doctrine to be scriptural and glorious. He did this with perfect ease.

Talk of the Mormons not believing the Bible! They believe all the truths in our Bible and nearly half a dozen others. Next came a description of the Nauvoo House, a splendid edifice now being erected for the accommodation of illustrious visitors that may call at the Holy City from time to time. He then spoke of the industry, temperance, virtue and integrity of the Saints in general, and related two or three witty anecdotes, illustrating the character of the Prophet, and setting him in a very favorable light before the public. . . .[25]

The large assembly room on the ground floor had been hurriedly completed so that it could be used as a meeting place. The first Sabbath service was held in the growing temple on the 21st day of May, 1843, under the direction of Joseph Smith. The Sacrament was served to the congregation. The October conference of that year was held in the new building, though the walls were likely not more than two stories high. The pungent odor of the fresh, unseasoned pine lumber greeted the multitude as they assembled in the new building for their meetings.

Early in 1844, Hyrum Smith made a proclamation to the women of the Church, asking them to subscribe one penny each week as a special fund for buying glass and nails for the temple. In public and in private this project was discussed. The women gladly accepted the assignment and in every home there were small cans or jars in which the spare pennies began to ac-

[25] *Times and Seasons*, IV, 126.

cumulate. The patriarch promised the women that a record would be kept of all who contributed to this worthy fund, and Mercy Thompson was appointed to keep such a record. When the temple would be finished, there would be a special place reserved for the women who had honored this pledge and had given their mites for this worthy cause.

The project became so popular in a few months that upon the death of Hyrum Smith it was continued under the leadership of Alpheus Cutler, with Mercy Thompson assisting. Many of the women paid for a whole year in advance, while others seemed to have forgotten that there were only about half a hundred weeks in a year, since their contributions averaged a few dollars each year.

At one time this collection purchased about $2,000 worth of glass for the new building. News of this enterprise spread over the land, and the Saints in the scattered branches and in distant lands gladly added their mites to the growing fund. The Saints in England launched another project — collecting funds from all the members in that land and spending it for the purchase of a large bell to be hung in the belfry of the temple. This giant bell is now to be seen in the Bureau of Information on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. It required many a shilling to purchase that large bell that was to serve as a sort of silver crown for the new building.

Soon after the stone walls had started to rise on Temple Hill, the Prophet issued this advice which was sent to all the branches of the Church:

> We would also say to all the Churches that inasmuch as they want the blessings of God and angels, as also of the Church of Jesus Christ, and wish to see it spread and prosper through the world, and Zion built up and truth and righteousness prevail, let all the different branches of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in all the world, call meetings in their respective places and tithe themselves and send up to this place to the Trustee in Trust, so that his hands may be loosed, and the Temple go on, and other works be done, such as the new translation of the Bible, and the record of Father Abraham published to the world.

As missionaries returned to Nauvoo after a long mission abroad, they were elated with the progress that had been made on the temple. The Saints at home gloried in the growing temple on the hill, rejoicing that they were permitted to build the second authorized temple in this dispensation. After the martyrdom of their two beloved leaders the Saints did not lose interest in the temple though they realized that they would leave it in the hands of the enemy when they completed it and were obliged to leave the city of their dreams.

It was President Brigham Young's fervent desire that the temple be finished and left as a monument to the martyrs, after which the builders of Nauvoo would be off in search of some oasis in the wilderness that nobody else wanted where they might be left alone for a season and enjoy the fruits of their labor which they had never been able to enjoy before.

The lives of the Saints were dedicated to this cause, and the temple arose to completion in a most remarkable and miraculous manner, to be abandoned and left as a monument to the thrift and integrity of the builders of Nauvoo.

Chapter 3

THERE WERE ENEMIES IN THE LAND

It was not a season of peace when the finishing touches were put on the temple in preparation to the administration of the endowment. The spirit of persecution and hatred did not die with the martyrs. The farmer folk in the neighboring towns seemed irked because the Mormons tarried in their new city to finish the temple before they should leave the state, yet their threats and interference did not put an end to the temple project.

As the enemy continued to burn barns, haystacks, and houses in the outlying settlements, President Brigham Young advised the brethren to leave their homes in the remote sections and gather with the Saints in Nauvoo. "The mob seemed determined to drive us to our duty in gathering," he declared, "and then drive us to carry the fulness of the gospel from among them and carry it to Israel."

As the torch was applied to the homes of the Saints a few miles from Nauvoo, the work went forward in the temple as if their enthusiasm for finishing the building increased as the enemy stepped up their tempo of persecution. It was reported that from fifty to one hundred Mormon homes had been burned by the autumn of 1845.[1]

In the spring of that year the last measured stone had been lifted into its niche, as the walls of the temple were completed. It was a season of festivity as the tall walls were completed and the stone masons were free to rest from their labors. It was the 24th day of May that the building stood in all its completed glory, the stones representing the sun, moon, and stars shining in the brilliance of that beautiful spring day. President Young dismissed the workmen for the day, advising them

[1]*Saturday Evening Post*, October 4, 1845.

to return to their homes and enjoy a rest from their labors. He requested that the historic day be spent as a hallowed day, giving thanks to God that they were permitted to complete the beautiful building thus far, and praying for divine protection that the interior of the building could soon be completed so that the endowment might be given before the year drew to a close.

After the band played several appropriate numbers, John Kay stood on the cornerstone and sang a new song which W. W. Phelps had composed for the occasion, "The Capstone Song." The band continued to play as the large crowd left the temple and started homeward. This was three years and twenty days since Joseph Smith had given the first endowments in this dispensation in his office above his store. Before the crowd dispersed, President Young led them in the "Hosanna Shout" as hundreds of white handkerchiefs were waved in unison with that sacred and significant shout. George A. Smith recorded in his diary that day that as he witnessed the celebration of the finished walls of the temple, "My feelings were such that I could not suppress a flood of tears. My father and hundreds of others wept. We dismissed the assembly as the mob had gathered in town with writs of attachments for some of the twelve."

While the church leaders were alert to the activities of the mobbers, they did not diminish the number of workmen employed in the temple as the many large rooms were prepared for service. As the mobbers increased their house-burning campaign, President Young devoted more time to the project of preparing for the exodus from the city. On the 28th of August he announced that 3,000 able-bodied men should be selected to prepare themselves to start the next spring and make the long journey to "Upper California," taking their families with them. Ten days later the brethren announced that 1500 men be selected to go to the Great Salt Lake Valley, and that a committee of five be appointed to gather information relative to emigration. Despite these outside interests the work in the temple was not neglected for a moment. A full crew of skilled

workmen labored through the long summer days, six days every week.

Another red-letter day was the fifth of October, 1845, when the first session of the general conference of the Church was held in the temple. This was a season of deep rejoicing, since there had been no general conference of the Church for three years. The windows were all installed for this special assembly, and temporary floors, seats, and pulpits had been put in place so that the members of the Church might meet in general conference in the house of the Lord.

President Young opened the services of the day with a prayer of thanksgiving, presenting the temple thus far completed, as a monument of the Saints' liberality, fidelity, and faith. It was written regarding that special conference in the temple:

> From mites and tithing, millions had risen up to the glory of God. . . . The day was occupied most agreeably in hearing instructions and teachings, and offering up the gratitude of honest hearts for so great a privilege as worshipping God within, instead of without an edifice, whose beauty and workmanship will compare with any house of worship in America, and whose motto is — Holiness To The Lord.

At this time the following appeared in the *Times and Seasons,* and soon found a reception in many hearts:

THE TEMPLE OF GOD AT NAUVOO

by W. W. Phelps

Ye servants that so many prophets foretold,
Should labor for Zion and not for the gold,
Go into the field ere the sun dries the dew,
And reap for the kingdom of God at Nauvoo.

Go carry glad tidings, that all may attend,
While God is unfolding "the time of the end";
And say to all nations, whatever you do,
Come, build up the Temple of God at Nauvoo.

Go say to the Islands that wait for his law,
Prepare for that glory the prophets once saw,
And bring on your gold and your precious things, too,
As tithes for the Temple of God at Nauvoo.

So say to the great men, who boast of a name;
To kings and their nobles, all born unto fame,
Come, bring on your treasures, antiquities, too,
And honor the Temple of God at Nauvoo.

Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,
For now we have prophets to bring forth his word,
And reveal to the Church what the world never knew,
By faith in the Temple of God at Nauvoo.

To spirits in prison the gospel is sent,
For on such a mission the Savior once went;
And we are baptized for the dead — surely, too,
In the font at the Temple of God at Nauvoo.

Up; watch! for the strange work of God has begun,
And new things are opening, now, under the sun;
And knowledge on knowledge will burst to our view,
From Seers in the Temple of God at Nauvoo.

It was a thrilling experience for the members of the Church to attend a general conference in the temple after so many months had passed since such a meeting was held in the city. A vast congregation was in attendance that day, but a terrible disappointment awaited them in the afternoon. At 2:00 o'clock as the assembly room was filled and ready for another spiritual feast, President Young arose and announced that the meeting would be dismissed at once, since a body of armed troops had suddenly entered the city. He ordered the congregation to hasten to their homes in peace, concluding his brief message with these plain words, "Be ye also ready."

Two full meetings on the next day concluded the first general conference in the temple. On that same day President Young recorded that General J. J. Hardin had pledged himself to the mob that he would go to Nauvoo and either arrest Orin

P. Rockwell and some others or he would unroof every house in Nauvoo. Three hundred ruffians had agreed to march with him from Quincy and others in neighboring towns were anxious to join them.

It was enough to sicken the hearts of the Saints as they thought of leaving Nauvoo soon after the temple would be finished, yet they had resolved that it would be the wise thing to do. Typical of the reaction of the faithful members of the Church to the decision to migrate from the state where they were so unwelcome and make the long trek across the continent, is the following tribute written by Orson Pratt while on a mission in New York City:

> . . . Since I heard of your persecutions and resolutions to leave Nauvoo in the spring, I can hardly contain myself. I want to fly upon the wings of the wind and be with you. Where you go, I want to go, where you stop, I want to stop. Brethren, give me counsel on this matter. Can I go with you in the spring? If so, is it my privilege to return this fall? Count me worthy to receive counsel on these important items. Should my feelings get the upper hand of me and I start forthwith for Nauvoo, I hope you will forgive me. I am willing to abide your counsel in all things.

On the last day of November the rooms in the attic were dedicated. It was a cold day, and during the service one of the brethren informed President Young that there were two officers waiting at the front door for him. He remarked that he could tarry in the warm building as long as they could wait in the cold. The door was well guarded so they could not enter the building.

The day the attic was dedicated, President Young made this entry in his history:

> Every hundred have established one or more wagon shops. Wheelwrights, carpenters and cabinetmakers are nearly all foreman wagon makers, and many not mechanics are at work in every part of the town preparing timbers for making wagons. The timber is cut and brought into the city green; hub, spoke, and felloe timber boiled in salt water; and other parts kiln dried. Shops are established at the Nauvoo House,

Masonic Hall, and Arsenal. Nearly every shop in town is employed in making wagons.

Teams are sent to all parts of the country to purchase iron. Blacksmiths are at work night and day and all hands are busily engaged getting ready for our departure westward as soon as possible. . . .

We trust in God, we praise him that we have been thus far able to prepare his Temple for the ordinances of the priesthood, and we feel full of confidence that he will hear our prayers and deliver his unoffending people from the power of their enemies where we can enjoy peace for a season.[2]

Despite the preparation for the exodus and the activity of the mobbers, the work went forward in the temple so that it would be finished in time for a few thousands to receive their endowments before they should leave for the West. The thoroughness with which the final touches were put on the interior of the building would indicate that most of the plastering and carpet laying had been accomplished. The meager record of this vast undertaking assures us that by the last of November the carpet was laid on the main floor of the attic story, and on several of the small rooms where the various quorums were to meet. By the eighth day of December the painters had completed the painting of the interior of the new building.

Before the cold weather halted the work of the mobbers in neighboring towns, no emergency was allowed to interfere with the work in the temple. Late in September the alarm gun was fired twice, calling the men to gather and draft a posse. It was decided to hoist a striped flag on the temple tower when the officers of the Nauvoo Legion were to muster, and a white flag when all the companies were to muster during the day. The firing of the Howitzer should be the signal of rendezvous in the night.

President Young recommended that in an emergency the workmen in the various shops should cease their work and organize for the protection of the city, except the ones who were working in the temple. No mere emergency should ever call

[2]*Documentary History of the Church,* VII, 535-6.

them from their tasks in the temple. Their labor was not to be delayed even if they were obliged to carry a sword in one hand while they labored in the new building.

A letter from friends at Macedonia brought the news that the enemy was training at Fountain Green, and that they had held many meetings in the area. "We are informed that this night has been set apart for the burning of this place," the epistle declared, "and if we are attacked we are in a poor condition for defence, as many are sick and some without arms." The letter closed with a petition for fifty or one hundred armed men from Nauvoo to rush to their aid immediately. Yet no unwelcome news like this was ever allowed to interfere with the labor that was being performed in the temple. The crews that were building wagons and making preparations for the exodus were called upon to meet such emergencies, but no skilled workmen in the temple were asked to heed the signal flag on the temple tower or even answer the loud bark of the Howitzer at night or the alarm gun in the day time.

While a vast number of workshops were filled with busy craftsmen getting everything in readiness for the exodus, and a large number of skilled men were at work in the temple, General Hardin arrived in the city with about four hundred troops. President Young and several of the brethren met the general near the temple, where they listened to a tirade from the general, insisting that the citizens of Nauvoo keep the peace. Martial law was threatened as a measure to make the Mormons submit to peace, whatever that meant.

The general then said he was especially interested in finding the bodies of two men who were last seen in Nauvoo and had likely been murdered there.

President Young made the general welcome, offering him hospitality in his own home while he remained in the city, but the haughty officer replied, "I always stay in camp." Several soldiers were sent into the temple to make a thorough search for the two missing men, as other soldiers searched the Masonic

Hall, the Nauvoo House, and the stables back of the Mansion House.

While searching in the stables, they became very excited when they found a place where a horse had been bled. When this was reported to General Hardin he demanded that he see the horse. He later went about the stable thrusting his sword into hay and even the manure pile as if he expected to find the missing corpses.

His troops were delayed at the Masonic Hall when they found a few kegs of wine and proceeded to sample the precious store. For three days the troops tramped through the city, heaping insults upon all who would listen to their complaining words. Before leaving the city, General Hardin wrote a letter which he left with President Young. It made it clear that the Mormons were remaining longer than their neighbors wanted them to stay. "It is impossible for your church to remain in this territory," the letter stated, "you will remove from the state with your whole church, in the manner you have agreed. Should you not do so . . . we may deprecate violence and bloodshed, that violent measures will be resorted to, to compel your removal."

Yet the work went forward in the temple as if their children's grandchildren would be expected to enjoy the fruits of their labor in the temple on the hill. The more the enemy threatened them, the more the brethren doubled their efforts to finish the temple at once. The torch bearers seemed to think that the finished temple would be such a binding link that they would not leave the city after it was finished.

The Saints had scarcely recovered from the disappointment of the visit of General J. J. Hardin until Major W. B. Warren visited Nauvoo. His mission was the same as that of the general, and his spirit was even more bitter and full of the venom of prejudice.

He demanded a meeting with a number of the leading brethren of the city, to whom he presented the request from Governor Thomas Ford that thieving, counterfeiting, the shield-

ing and protecting of criminals, and countless other infractions of the law should be stopped at once in Nauvoo. After the visitor had poured out his insults on his audience for a long time, Elder John Taylor arose and demanded that he be heard. Upon the ears of the angry officer these words fell like hot needles:

Major Warren, I stand before you as a man who has received deep injury from the citizens of this state, and consequently have some feelings. You talk, sir, about "the majesty of the law, and maintaining the law," why, sir, the law to us is a mere farce. For years past the law has been made use of only as an engine of oppression. We have received no protection from it. I have suffered under its cruel influence. You talk about your troops being efficient, supporting law and observing peace. This tale may do to tell some, but it fails to charm us.

I stand before you as a victim of such protection. I went from this place some time ago in a time of difficulty like the present, as one of a committee by the special request of Governor Ford, who solemnly pledged his honor for my protection; but how was I protected? I was shot nearly to pieces, and two of the best men in the world were shot dead at my side. This is a specimen of your protection. . . .

You talk about the majesty of the law! What has become of those murderers? Have they been hung or shot, or in any way punished? No, sir, you know they have not. With their hands yet reeking in blood, having become hardened in their deeds of infamy, knowing that they will not be punished, they are now applying the torch to the houses of those they have already so deeply injured.

What has been done to them under your administration? Have they been brought to justice, have they been punished for their infamous proceedings? No, sir, not one of them. They are still burning houses under your supervision, and you have either been unwilling or unable to stop them. Houses have been burned since your arrival here. Men have been kidnapped, cattle stolen, our brethren abused and robbed when going after their corn. Are we to stand still and let marauders and house-burners come into our city under the real or assumed name of "governor's troops," and yet offer no resistance to their nefarious deeds? Are we to be held still by you, sir, while they thrust the hot iron into us? I tell you plainly for one I will not do it. . . .

Where is the spirit of '76? Where is the fire that burned in the bosoms of those who fought and bled for liberty? Is there no one who will stand up in defense of the oppressed? If a man had the least spark of humanity burning in his bosom — if he were not hardened and desperate, he would be ashamed to oppress a people already goaded by a yoke too

intolerable to be borne, and that, too, in a boasted land of liberty. Talk about law! Sir, I stand before you as a victim of law. . . . I will not stand such infernal rascality, and if I have to fight it out, I will sell my life as dearly as I can.[3]

During this emergency not a man was called from his assigned labor in the temple to attend meetings or to train with the Legion as further preparations were made for the defense of the city. Even though the building committee had no funds, they had faith and dreams. As men were armed and sent to protect their colleagues at Bear Creek, Macedonia, Ramus, and Plymouth, the full crew in the temple labored through every hour of daylight.

Early in July a sum of money came into the hands of the building committee in a most remarkable manner. Joseph Toronto, a native of Sicily, had served for years in the Italian navy. He had carefully saved his life's earnings which he took with him to America. After a very miraculous conversion to the Church he hastened to Nauvoo, arriving at this time of crisis when the building committee had just distributed all food and supplies to the workmen. They were destitute at the moment.

This new convert visited a meeting in Nauvoo and heard President Young make a plea for help so that the building could soon be finished. After the meeting he met with the brethren, removed his money belt and shook $2,500 worth of golden coins from it, all of which he gave to the temple fund. A few years later this good man went with Lorenzo Snow on a mission to Italy, where he converted many people, including nine of his kinsmen. Among his many descendants in the Church at the present time are bishops, stake presidents, mission presidents, and prominent statesmen.

In due time the temple was finished enough that the endowment could be given to many of the builders of the beautiful building. Typical of the tributes that were paid to

[3]B. H. Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, pp. 163-6.

the new building was the following which was published in the New York *Sun*:

> The building of the Mormon Temple under all the troubles by which those people have been surrounded, seems to be carried on with a religious enthusiasm which reminds us of olden times, by the energy which controls all the movements towards its completion. It occupies the highest and most imposing position in Nauvoo and is built of fine limestone. . . .
>
> Three hundred and fifty men are zealously at work upon the building.[4]

[4] *Documentary History of the Church*, VII, 434.

Chapter 4

THE TEMPLE AFTER THE MARTYRDOM

After the burial of the martyrs, the Saints were determined to rush the temple to completion and leave it as a monument to their martyred leaders in case the enemy drove them into the wilderness. For almost two weeks after the secret burial of the martyrs the Saints were so stunned by the great loss that no work was done on the building. Instead of laboring on the edifice the workmen armed themselves and stood on guard, day and night, lest the spirit of Carthage send the enemy to destroy the temple on the hill.

On the eighth of July it was resolved to resume the labor on the temple, but to cease the work on the Nauvoo House, all attention to be given to the building of the temple. During the first week in July two large rafts loaded with lumber from the pine country arrived in the city. This put fresh courage into the broken hearts of the workmen and inspired a feeling of confidence.

As the days of sorrow crept away, the Saints began to think of something besides the cruel murder of their leaders. They realized that the Church was greater than any man, and that the heavenly inspiration that had started it was not silenced or crushed by the mob with blackened faces and smoking muskets at the new jail at Carthage. One visitor to the sorrowing city wrote an article for the *Times and Seasons* in which he said, "The Church seems more united since the death of General Smith, than when I was here last year. Your union is almost a miracle, and there seems to be a spirit thrilling through all the bosoms of all Nauvoo."

A few months after the martyrdom a newspaper in a neighboring city declared that, "The temple is progressing very rapidly." Then it gave as the reason for the progress in the building

project, "The leaders tell the people that when it is finished Joe will appear and dedicate it."[1]

Soon after the martyrdom President Brigham Young advised the Saints to be content to remain in the city and finish the temple. From his instructions we glean these golden gems of wisdom:

> I wish you to distinctly understand that the counsel of the Twelve is for every family that does not belong to the Pine Company to stay in Nauvoo to build the Temple and obtain the endowments to be given therein. Do not scatter. United we stand, divided we fall. It has been whispered abroad that all who go into the wilderness with Wight and Miller will get their endowments. *They* cannot give an endowment in the wilderness. If we do not carry out the plan laid down by Joseph, we can get no further endowments. I want this to sink deep into your hearts that you may appreciate it. . . .
>
> We want to build the Temple in this place even if we have to do as the Jews did in the erection of the Temple at Jerusalem; work with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other. Stay here. Plow, sow, and build. Put your plowshares into the prairie. One plowshare will do more to drive off the mob than two guns.
>
> Do you suppose the mouth of God is closed to be opened no more? If this were true, I would not give the ashes of a rye straw for this Church. If God has ceased to speak by revelation or by the Holy Ghost, there is no salvation, but such is not so. . . .
>
> I would rather pay out every cent to build up this place and receive an endowment, even were I driven the next minute without anything to take with me.[2]

The work went forward with surprising speed. In September the first of the capitals was lifted into place. Each one weighed about two tons. On the sixth day of December the last of the capitals was hoisted into place amid the cheers of the multitude who witnessed the achievement of this climax of their labor. These huge stones were cut by Charles Lambert and Harvey Stanley. It had also been a time of rejoicing when the star stones had been placed in their positions. Equally pleased were the builders of the temple when the wooden font

[1]Burlington (Iowa) *Hawkeye*, September 12, 1844.
[2]M. F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, p. 226.

was removed from the baptistry and the stone font and stone oxen replaced the former ones that had been carved from pine planks. William W. Player had been in charge of the preparation of the stone font, assisted by eleven skilled workmen. Other supervisors included the following:

Albert P. Rockwood, overseer of the stone quarry.
Truman O. Angel, foreman over the regular joiners.
William Felshaw, foreman of the tithing donations.
Wandle Mace, foreman of the framers.
William T. Cahoon, foreman of the raisers and also timekeeper.
Miles Romney, foreman of the Star builders. He also carved all the capitals for the tower.
Elijah Fordham, principal carver.

Before this tragic year of martyrdom drew to a close, the temple was tall enough to attract the attention and admiration of all who visited the city. Most visitors were amazed that the Saints would have the courage to complete the building after their two honored leaders had been martyred, and the bitter spirit of the enemy was still abroad in the land. An editorial in the *Times and Seasons* said of this subject:

They felt also to mourn over the bodies of their martyred chiefs, to hang their harps upon the willows, and in their overwhelming grief to cease for a while from the common avocations of life. Their feelings over, and they awoke from their stupor, they started again into life, and everywhere might be seen the mechanic, the laborer, and the husbandman, following with their wonted alacrity all the various avocations of life.

Great numbers of brick houses have been and are being put up; various branches of manufactures have been started, and every thing wears the aspect of industry, content, and prosperity.

The Temple has progressed with greater rapidity since the death of Joseph and Hyrum than ever it has done before; and things in this city never looked more prosperous.

As it regards the church, there never was more faith manifested, nor a greater degree of union than exists at the present time; the church has been more perfectly organized lately in its different quorums; there are fewer dissatisfied spirits in our midst; and peace and harmony universally prevail.

The idea of the church being disorganized and broken up because of the Prophet and Patriarch being slain, is preposterous. This church has the seeds of immortality in its midst. It is not of man, nor by man — it is the offspring of Deity: it is organized after the pattern of heavenly things, through the principles of revelation: by the opening of the heavens, by the ministering of angels, and the revelations of Jehovah. It is not affected by the death of one or two, or fifty individuals; it possesses a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, having the power of an endless life, without beginning of days, or end of years.

It is organized for the purpose of saving this generation and generations that are past; it exists in time and will exist in eternity. This church fall? No! Times and seasons may change, revolution may succeed revolution, thrones may be cast down, and empires be dissolved, earthquakes may rend the earth from centre to circumference, and mountains may be hurled off of their places, and the mighty ocean be moved from its bed; but amidst the crash of worlds and the crack of matter, truth, eternal truth, must remain unchanged, and those principles which God has revealed to his Saints be unscathed amidst the warring elements, and remain as firm as the throne of Jehovah.[3]

The New York *Spectator* published the following tribute to the Saints. It had first been published in the Boston *Transcript*:

All the Mormons do not reside in the city; if they did, their number would increase the astonishment which already prevails. They extend both up and down the river for nearly thirty miles as farmers — Quite a town is also growing up on the Missouri side, opposite Nauvoo. The ground plot of Nauvoo is shaped somewhat like an ox bow. The river embraces two sides of it; while the back ground rises magnificently about a mile from the Mississippi, giving the observer a vast field of vision over the most lovely rural scenery imaginable.

At the summit, overlooking the whole landscape for nearly twenty-five miles in all directions, stands the Mormon temple, the largest structure in any of the Western states. When completed it is assumed that the entire cost will not vary much from four hundred thousand dollars. Nothing can be more original in architecture — each of its huge pilasters rests upon a block of stone, bearing in relief on its face the profile of a new moon, represented with a nose, eye and mouth, as sometimes seen in almanacs. On the top, not far from fifty feet high, is an ideal representation of the rising sun, which is a monstrous prominent stone face, the features of which are colossal and singularly expressive. Still higher are

[3] *The Times and Seasons*, V, 744, December 15, 1844.

two enormously large hands grasping two trumpets, crossed. These all stand out on the stone boldly.

Their finish is admirable and as complete as any of the best specimens of chiseling on the Girard College at Philadelphia. The interior is to be one vast apartment, about 108 feet by 80, simply subdivided by three great veils, or rich crimson drapery, suspended from the ceiling overhead. Neither pews, stools, cushions or chairs are to encumber the holy edifice. In the basement is the font of baptism — which, when completed according to the design, will be a pretty exact imitation of the brazen laver in Solomon's temple.

The tank is perhaps eight feet square, resting on the backs of twelve carved oxen. They are of noble dimensions, with large spreading horns, represented to be standing in water halfway up to their knees. The execution of the twelve oxen evidence a degree of ingenuity, skill and perseverance that would redound to the reputation of an artist in any community. When they are finally gilded, as intended, and the laver is made to resemble cast brass, together with the finishing up of the place in which the unique apparatus of the church is lodged — as a whole, that part of the temple will be one of the most striking artificial curiosities in this country.

When the officiating priests in their long robes of office lead on a solemn procession of worshippers through the sombre avenues of the basement story, chanting as they go, the effect must be exceedingly imposing to those who may deplore the infatuation of a whole city of Mormon devotees.

Although estimated to cost so large a sum, the walls of the temple are gradually rising from day to day by the concurrent, unceasing labor of voluntary laborers. Every brother gives one day in ten to the undertaking. Thus there are always as many hands employed as can be conveniently on the work at the same time. The architect and different master workmen are constantly at hand to direct the operations. Each day, therefore, ushers in a new set of operatives.

Some fine brick buildings are already raised on the different streets, and stores are continually going up. Even were the Mormons to abandon the city, as it is asserted that they will, somebody will own the property — and a city it is, and a city it will continue to be, of importance unconnected with the false religious tenets of its inhabitants. But the Mormons will never leave Nauvoo. Its associations are hallowed in their excited imaginations. They would relinquish life as soon as they would voluntarily, en masse, leave their glorious habitation, which to them is the gate of heaven.[4]

[4]New York *Spectator*, November 9, 1844.

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On Christmas day of that tragic year of martyrdom, W. W. Phelps wrote a long letter to William Smith, who had been absent from the city for a long season as a missionary. Regarding the temple he enclosed this interesting information:

> The Temple is up as high as the caps of the pilasters, and it looks majestic, and especially to me, when I know that the tithing, "the mites of the poor," thus speaks of the glory of God. All the description that is necessary to give now, is that this splendid model of Mormon grandeur, exhibits thirty hewn stone pilasters which cost $3,000 apiece. The base is a crescent new moon; the capitals, near fifty feet high, the sun, with a human face in bold relief, about two and a half feet broad, ornamented with rays of light and waves, surmounted by two hands holding two trumpets.
>
> It is always too much trouble to describe an unfinished building. The inside work is now going forward as fast as possible. When the whole structure is completed it will cost some five or six hundred thousand dollars; and as Captain Brown of Tobasco, near the ruins of Palenque, said, "it will look the nearest like the splendid remains of antiquity in Central America of anything he had seen, though not half so large."
>
> The temple is erected from white limestone wrought in a superior style. It is 128 by 83 feet square; near 60 feet high. Two stories in the clear, and two half stories in the recesses over the arches; four tiers of windows, two Gothic and two round. The two great stories will each have two pulpits, one at each end, to accommodate the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods. . . .

At the close of that year of sorrow and lamentation the Saints were determined to complete the temple and leave it as a monument to the martyrs, though they would soon be obliged to leave the city of their dreams and push across the nation, seeking a homeland in a wilderness claimed by Mexico. The rising temple of the hill was also a monument to their faith and unity.

At a special Sabbath service in Brigham City, Utah, under the direction of President Lorenzo Snow, June 24, 1894, Bathsheba W. Smith the widow of George A. Smith, was invited to speak on the subject of temple work in Nauvoo. She related that she was the only woman living who had been endowed under the personal direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the

few others who had received that blessing having passed away.

President Wilford Woodruff was in attendance at the meeting and spoke on the same subject. He bore his testimony relative to receiving the temple endowment at the hands of Joseph Smith, emphasizing the fact that he was the only living man who was thus endowed under the direction of the Prophet. "There are many more," he said, "who likewise had this great privilege, but they are all dead, leaving only these two witnesses."[5]

Bathsheba W. Smith was interviewed further on this subject and gave the following information: When the endowments were administered in the Prophet's office above his store, Emma Smith was in charge of preparing the room for the occasion and then washing and ironing the clothes that were used for that purpose. By the time the temple was completed and the endowments were given in that building, Emma had become out of harmony with the twelve and with the Church and never attended an endowment session in the temple or assisted with the work in any manner.

Mercy R. Thompson, the sister of Hyrum Smith's wife, Mary, was in charge of that work in the Nauvoo Temple. She was assisted by the wives of Titus Billings and Alpheus Cutler. Many other women, however, labored with them in this necessary assignment. Regarding this activity it was recorded:

> Mercy R. Thompson went to work in the Nauvoo Temple the very first day and worked and worked there constantly until the work was over. . . . She had charge of the washing and ironing of clothes for the workers, a work that often kept her up nearly all night. She also at one time had charge of the cooking department.
>
> Sister Bathsheba W. Smith was one of the very few who had their endowments in the Prophet's lifetime, and it is worthy of mention here that her testimony is that the ordinances in our temples today are exactly the same as was that of the first ordinances given under the Prophet's direction. She had her blessings in Nauvoo in 1843. She remembers the names of the first couples who received their endowments, and these were the Prophet and wife, the Patriarch and wife.[6]

[5] *Young Woman's Journal*, August, 1894.
[6] *Ibid.*, IV, 289.

Several members of the Council of the Twelve were listed, with their wives, as having received these ordinances during the summer of 1843 under the direction of Joseph Smith. On many occasions this valiant and reliable witness continued to testify that the endowment as given by Joseph Smith in his office above his store was exactly the same as was administered in the finished temples in Utah.

As the temple neared completion the brethren rejoiced that so many of them had been endowed under the Prophet's direction and were thus in a position to assist with the important labors in the new temple. Many of the women, the wives of the General Authorities, and a few other leading women of the Church had received this great blessing before the martyrdom and were eager to assist others in the labor of love in the temple.

Thus when the temple was completed and ready for the administration of the ordinances of the Lord's house, there were many who had previously received these blessings and knew exactly how to proceed with the ceremony in the new building. Manuscript copies of instructions had surely been preserved so that President Young and the assisting brethren would know exactly how to administer the blessings of the temple.

Chapter 5

THE FINISHED TEMPLE ON THE HILL

The year 1845 was a jubilee year in Nauvoo. During that year the temple was completed, and the blessings of the Lord's house were administered to hundreds of the Saints.

The temple was not completed in all its deserving beauty and elegance as temples are completed today, but the necessary rooms were hastily prepared for the endowment that was to be given. For months the Church leaders were aware of the fact that the government officials in Washington and at Springfield had decided that the Mormons should not be allowed to leave the state until the tension with England and Mexico was relieved regarding the boundary lines of growing America.

At that moment it was resolved by the twelve that as soon as winter settled over the land and the river froze until no loaded boats could be sent upstream and militia men sent overland to overtake the fleeing Mormons, they would leave their sturdy homes and flee across the Iowa prairie in the dead of winter. Their leaders thought of the great expense of the exodus and carefully counted the pennies that were to be spent in furnishing the many rooms in the temple. Though they would have enjoyed spending a vast sum in filling the numerous rooms with elaborate furniture, paintings, and draperies, as the edifice so well-deserved, they must be content to improvise the scantiest necessities so that the rooms could serve the purpose for which they were built, without emptying the treasury that was necessary for a trek across the continent.

Thousands of dollars could have been spent on the interior of the new building, but it was hurriedly put in order, and the endowment was administered to hundreds of the Saints before the doors of the temple were closed, and the exiles were upon the frozen prairies of Iowa.

Perhaps there were many rooms in the building whose walls were not covered with lath and plaster. Perhaps factory cloth, canvas, or other curtain material covered the walls and ceilings in the upper story rooms. There were some large assembly rooms and many small rooms that were not to be used in the temple ritual, so they were not put in order and beautifully decorated and furnished with the best of equipment. In all such rooms the pungent odor of fresh pine timber, uncovered by plaster, pictures or carpets, greeted the visitors. There may have been many plank floors and stairways uncovered with carpets, and many walls and ceilings presenting an unfinished condition.

There may have been room on the walls for dozens of pictures that were not hung on the eve of the exodus. There was ample room for hundreds of other objects of beauty and ornamental design. Bare boards in many rooms, large and small, might have been visible, but the rooms that were necessary for the temple ritual were quickly prepared, and the endowment was administered within the new temple though the building was not as elaborately furnished as was the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.

It is evident that the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith did not silence the mission of Elijah or halt the building of the temple any more than the death of Jesus put an end to Christianity. At the dawn of that historic year the twelve issued the following proclamation:

> We wish to inform you brethren that the work in which we are engaged is great and mighty, it is the work of God and we have to rush it forth against the combined powers of earth and hell, we feel it to be an arduous undertaking whilst you, many of you have been enjoying ease, prosperity and peace at home. We have had to combat mobs and to wade through blood to fulfil the work devolving upon us, and you: we have been exerting our energies, expended our money; and employing our time, our labor, our influence, and means for the accomplishment of this purpose; and feeling confident dear brethren, that you would like to share with us the labor, as well as the glory, we make the following requests:
>
> We wish all the young, middle-aged, and able bodied men who have

it in their hearts to stretch forth this work with power, to come to Nauvoo, prepared to stay during the summer; and to bring with them means to sustain themselves with, and to enable us to forward this work; to bring with them teams, cattle, sheep, gold, silver, brass, iron, oil, paints and tools; and let those who are within market distance of Nauvoo bring with them provisions to sustain themselves and others during their stay. And let all the churches send all the money, cloth, and clothing, together with the raw material for manufacturing purposes; such as cotton, cotton yarn, wool, steel, iron, brass and etc., as we are preparing to go into extensive manufacturing operations, and all these things can be applied to the furtherance of the Temple.

There was a font erected in the basement story of the Temple, for the baptism of the dead, and healing of the sick and other purposes; this font was made of wood, and was only intended for the present use; but it is now removed, and as soon as the stone cutters get through with the cutting of the stone for the walls of the Temple, they will immediately proceed to cut the stone for and erect a font of hewn stone. This font will be of an oval form and twelve feet in length and eight wide, with stone steps and an iron railing; this font will stand upon twelve oxen, which will be cast of iron or brass, or perhaps hewn stone: if of brass, polished; if of iron, bronzed: — upon each side of the font there will be a suit of rooms fitted up for the washings. In the recessed, on each side of the arch, on the first story, there will be a suit of rooms or antechambers, lighted with the first row of circular windows. As soon as a suitable number of those rooms are completed we shall commence the endowment.[1]

The unity and industry in Nauvoo made the enemy more anxious to drive the Saints from the state. They were afraid that the completed temple would become a binding tie that would hold the Saints in Illinois as the mighty Mississippi held Nauvoo in its strong embrace.

In February President Young and Heber C. Kimball visited a branch of the Church at Macedonia, near Carthage. There was excitement in Nauvoo when the news filtered in that the two church leaders had been arrested and were confined in Carthage Jail. Hosea Stout and seven policeman in Nauvoo quickly left the city, hastening to Macedonia to investigate the rumor. They were delighted to learn that the report was not

[1] *Journal History*, January 14, 1845.

true, but there was so much unfavorable feeling in the area that twenty-three brethren at that place armed themselves and accompanied the Nauvoo police and the church leaders back to their homes.

The danger of mob violence, however, did not hinder the work on the Lord's house. On the first day of April the *Times and Seasons* assured the public that the Church had not died with the martyrs, and that the enemy would not triumph:

THE SAINTS MAKE NAUVOO

Notwithstanding the ebullitions of apostates, and their terrible exits; notwithstanding the awful assassination of our inspired prophet and patriarch; notwithstanding the legislature of Illinois have feloniously robbed us of our charter, and notwithstanding a knot of vagabond newspapers, by publishing outrageous falsehoods to inflame the public mind against us; have rolled up the black thunder heads of mobocracy, to scatter "the fire shower of ruin," yet Nauvoo keeps the even tenor of its way. The spring has met us with an early emigration of saints, never before equalled: they come by land and water. . . .

Come then, brethren, come then, sisters,
From the place where'er you're found,
In compliance with the wishes
Of the saints on Zion's ground.
This the city of the prophets;
This the gathering place for you;
This the city of our Joseph;
Yes, the city of Nauvoo.

Chapter 6

THE ENDOWMENTS ARE GIVEN IN THE TEMPLE

"Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob." Isaiah 2:3.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. . . . Because of the house of the Lord our God I will see thy good." Psalm 122:1, 9.

"This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Genesis 28:17.

There were many important dates in connection with the building of the temple, but the red-letter day that was the climax of the calendar with respect to the building of the glorious temple on the hill was December 10, 1845. On that memorable day the first endowments were given in the new building.

In the morning of that important day, so long awaited by the builders of Nauvoo, two Catholic officials were taken through the new building and met with the leading brethren of the Church in relation to purchasing or leasing the new building on the eve of the Mormon exodus from the city. This meeting may have delayed the first session that was conducted through the building. It was late in the afternoon before this select group started to receive the endowment. The service lasted until 3:30 the next morning.

The first few sessions were small ones, enabling the officiators to become well-acquainted with the procedure and get it well in hand before the large rooms were filled with eager people. The first session included only thirty persons. Mother Lucy Smith and Mercy Thompson, the sister of Hyrum Smith's widow, spent the day assisting in the temple, getting everything in readiness in the various rooms, but they did not remain for the long session. Both of them, however, were present the next day and went through with the small company. There is no record that the widow of Joseph Smith ever entered the temple after it was completed.

Mercy Thompson worked in the temple every day it was open for endowments, serving in every department in the temple. She had one daughter, a small girl, who went to the temple with her. They had an apartment in the building, staying there night and day. For months at a time the little girl scarcely went outside of the new building.

Included in this first group to receive the endowment in the Nauvoo Temple were Heber C. Kimball, George A. Smith, Orson Hyde, John Smith, Newel K. Whitney, Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Amasa Lyman, John Taylor, John E. Page, and their wives. Willard Richards and Joseph C. Kingsbury were in the group, but their wives did not attend that session. Mary Smith, Hyrum's widow, and Agnes, the widow of Don Carlos Smith, were in the first company.

The next day, at the second session in the new building, only fifteen persons attended the temple session. The third day the number increased to fifty-five, while on Saturday, the 13th, the number was forty-five. On Sunday the twelve and a few other leaders and their wives met in the attic story. After the Sacrament was administered they enjoyed a preaching service. The endowment record for the month of December is as follows:

30	persons	December	10
15	"	"	11
55	"	"	12
45	"	"	13
64	"	"	15
69	"	"	16
69	"	"	17
66	"	"	18
98	"	"	19
95	"	"	20
106	"	"	22
87	"	"	23
122	"	"	24
107	"	"	25

Christmas was no holiday in the temple, as 107 persons received their endowments on that day. There was no session in the temple the day after Christmas since the shipment of olive oil had been delayed. For a few days the Saints were unable to enjoy the fruits of their labor. President Young remarked at the time of this announcement that "if the brethren do not get any more than they have already received, they have got all they have worked for in building this house." Two hundred sixty-eight high priests had received their endowments during the month of December.

BOGUS BRIGHAM

Two days before Christmas while President Young was likely meditating on Joseph Smith, since that was his birthday, a friend informed him that a U.S. marshal was in town searching for him. He ordered his coachman to get his team and carriage ready and drive him to the front door of the temple. He felt sure that the marshal would watch him drive to the temple and would soon be there to arrest him.

The moment he entered the temple he looked about in the room for a man his size. He selected William Miller and asked him to put on the president's coat and hat and get into the waiting carriage at the front door and the coachman would drive him away. The moment William Miller attempted to enter the waiting coach the marshal was at the door to arrest him. He was sure that it was Brigham Young, so without asking a question about his identity he simply placed him under arrest on a writ from the United States Court, charging him with counterfeiting the coin of the nation. Brother Miller told him that there must be some mistake, as he was not guilty of such an offense, but the marshal insisted that it was true and that he would take him to Carthage for trial.

They had a friend examine the writ, and he pronounced it genuine, so the marshal demanded that they leave at once for the county seat. While President Young was busy planning

for a surprise exodus from the city and assisting every day with the temple service, William Miller went with the marshal and his assistants to Carthage.

During the journey the marshal was very happy, being elated over the capture of Brigham Young, an achievement that so many other officers had failed to accomplish. He became very jubilant and broke into hysterical laughter as he contemplated the thrill he would experience when he exhibited his prisoner in Carthage. He even told the story of the Mormon named Turley who had escaped him, an event that had caused him much embarrassment and criticism, all of which would be forgotten now that he had captured the number one prize on the wanted list from Nauvoo. He seemed very anxious to get to the county seat and exhibit his elusive prize before the magistrates and the curious public who would be rejoicing in the victory.

When they reached their destination the guest was lodged in the Hamilton tavern, while the happy marshal kept a careful watch on his prisoner. He told the news to the inn keeper and the guests who were in the lobby of the hotel, and the welcome information soon spread around the town that finally they had captured Brigham Young. As the curious people gathered to see the prisoner, some of them broke the unwelcome news to the marshal that the prisoner was not Brigham Young.

Finally the marshal asked the prisoner his name, for the first time. When he replied that he was William Miller, the marshal was almost frantic with anger and disappointment. The prisoner was taken before one of the local magistrates who also knew that this was not Brigham Young. The magistrate was so thoroughly disgusted with the marshal for making such a blunder that with all the irony and sarcasm he could muster he asked him, "Is there anything more you wish to do with Mr. Young?"

The prisoner was then released and the case dismissed. There was much laughing and rejoicing in Nauvoo when the

prisoner was returned to his home and told the story to his friends.

Two days after Christmas another U.S. marshal was in Nauvoo, searching for the twelve. He was freely admitted to every part of the temple where he wanted to look for them. He was asked to remove his hat when he entered the building, but when he was taken to the large room in the attic where the painting had just been applied and the new carpet spread over the floor, he was asked to remove his boots, which he did. On the 29th of the month a company of only twelve persons formed a session. This took the total number for the month of December to 1,000 endowments. The following day eighty-eight persons went through the temple.

This company finished the ceremony at an early hour of the night, and it was whispered to President Young that the marshal who had been searching for him had just left for Carthage and from there to Springfield, so that they should be free from writs and agents for a season. This brought a flood of happiness and joy to the workers in the temple, feeling that there would be a season of peace in store for them.

The people who attended the temple service took their lunches with them. They usually were ready to return to their homes by three or four o'clock in the morning. The cold, dark December nights made it an unwelcome task to leave the warm temple and go out into the bitter cold and find their way home in the darkness. They usually met in a large room where they ate their lunches and engaged in conversation, delaying the hour of their departure as long as they could.

President Young was so happy to have escaped the marshal who a few days before had taken William Miller by mistake, and so thrilled to learn that another marshal from the state capital had left the city unable to capture him, that he thought this was a festive season to celebrate the victory of the Saints over their enemies. The President has written of the spirit of praise and jubilee that characterized this meeting at the

close of the endowment session on that day when they felt free from unlawful writs and prowling marshals:

> The labors of the day having been brought to a close at so early an hour, viz., eight-thirty, it was thought proper to have a little season of recreation. Accordingly, Brother Hanson was invited to produce his violin, which he did, and played several lively airs accompanied by Elisha Averett on his flute, among others some very good lively dancing tunes.
>
> This was too much for the gravity of Brother Joseph Young who indulged in dancing a hornpipe, and was soon joined by several others, and before the dance was over several French fours were indulged in. The first was opened by myself with Sister Whitney and Elder Heber C. Kimball and partner. The spirit of dancing increased until the whole floor was covered with dancers, and while we danced before the Lord, we shook the dust from our feet as a testimony against the nation.
>
> After the dancing had continued about an hour, several excellent songs were sung, in which several of the brethren and sisters joined. The "Upper California" was sung by Erastus Snow, after which I called upon Sister Whitney who stood up and invoked the gift of tongues. The interpretation was given by her husband, Bishop Whitney, and me. It related to our efforts to build this house to the privilege we now have of meeting in it, our departure shortly to the country of the Lamanites, their rejoicing when they hear the gospel, and of the ingathering of Israel.
>
> I spoke in a foreign tongue; likewise Brother Kimball. After a little conversation of a general nature I closed the exercise of the evening by prayer.[1]

This season of recreation in the temple was enjoyed but a short time until President Young insisted that they refrain from dancing in the sacred building lest the spirit of levity creep into their solemn meetings and mar the sanctity of the Lord's house. He declared that he never wished to hear the sound of a violin that did not have inscribed on its crest, "Holiness to the Lord!"

The last day of the year that saw the temple finished, eighty-four persons went through the temple. President Young and Heber C. Kimball spent much of the day examining maps and reports about the West, "with reference to selecting a location for the Saints west of the Rocky Mountains."

[1] *Documentary History of the Church*, VII, 557.

1846, YEAR OF DECISION

At the dawn of the new year the Church leaders were determined to leave the state and plunge into the wilderness. With the temple finished they had kept their pledge with the Lord and felt free to seek out their destiny in a distant land beyond the reach of their old enemies. While much time and money were being devoted to the project of the exodus, many skilled workmen were busy in the temple even after they started giving the endowments. The laying of carpets in the small rooms and the final touches of decorating continued long after the first endowments were given. The Lord's house was to be made as beautiful as possible before they should abandon it and hasten off toward the West.

Men worked in shifts around the clock, many of them remaining in the new building all night, keeping the wood burning in the new stoves so that the rooms would be warm for the ones who should attend the service on the following day. Near the stoves the damp clothes were dried and prepared for use the next day. Armed men stood on guard at the door so that the enemy would not break into the building and burn it as had been predicted long before it was finished.

On the first day of the new year the plasterers were busy covering the arched ceiling of the lower hall. The framework for the pulpits and the seats for the choir were erected, and every effort was exerted to get the building ready for dedication.

On the second day of the new year Elder Kimball related a dream he had experienced the previous night. He said that he prayed to the Lord before retiring, asking that his mind would be enlightened regarding the endowment. He soon fell asleep and dreamed that he and others were engaged in gathering ears of corn in a field at harvest time. The husbandman told them to hasten with all speed since a severe storm was expected to put an end to the harvest and halt the laborers in the field.

He was convinced that the dream was a token of the trouble that awaited the builders of Nauvoo, and that they must labor with all diligence, taking advantage of every hour so that as many as possible might enjoy the blessings of the Lord's house before the storm should break and the work would be terminated.

His dream was taken seriously by all the Saints in the city, and the month of January was a very busy one in the temple. While the workmen spent many hours every day painting, decorating, and otherwise preparing the building on the eve of their departure from the city, the endowment record for that busy month was as follows:

89	persons	January	1/46
64	"	"	2/46
114	"	"	3/46
104	"	"	5/46
90	"	"	6/46
121	"	"	7/46
81	"	"	8/46
105	"	"	9/46
118	"	"	10/46
143	"	"	12/46
36	"	"	17/46
195	"	"	20/46
208	"	"	21/46
198	"	"	22/46
128	"	"	23/46
151	"	"	24/46
126	"	"	27/46
172	"	"	28/46
133	"	"	29/46
172	"	"	30/46
233	"	"	31/46
		Total	2,781

President Young and several of his colleagues practically lived in the temple during the few weeks that the endowments were being administered to the faithful members of the Church. The daylight hours were occupied with that important service, while far into the long nights their labors continued so that many of the people could receive these desired blessings before they were obliged to leave the city. The busy President never slept more than four hours each night and never went to his own home except once a week during that crowded season of activity.

Information reached Nauvoo that a mob had been organized in Iowa to await the Mormon migration in the spring. They were expected to have everything in readiness when the spring season arrived so that they would be able to put an end to the Mormon migration. They had resolved to dress as Indians and act accordingly when the exodus was in progress. Such rumors, however, did not put an end to the plans for leaving the state or halt the labors in the temple during the early winter months.

The month of February blew in on a blast of snow and ice, yet it did not cool the ardor of the Saints regarding the labor in the temple, nor did the cold weather chill their plans to surprise the foe and flee from the city when they least expected them to go. The first day of the month was Sunday, and a Sabbath service was held in the large assembly room on the second floor.

On the second day of the month 234 persons received ordinances in the temple. President Young and the brethren spent many hours that day completing their secret plans for the unexpected removal from the city when the weather should get so cold that the militia men in the neighboring towns would never dare leave their warm firesides and venture into the bitter cold in order to intercept the fleeing Mormons. On that day the President counseled many of the brethren to have everything in readiness so that within four hours after the decision was made to leave at once, the first loaded wagons could be rolling toward the river. "Our enemies have resolved to intercept us

whenever we start," the President told his listeners; "I should like to push on as far as possible before they are aware of our movements."

Messengers were dispatched to the captains of hundreds and fifties, inviting them to meet at 4:00 o'clock that afternoon. At the meeting full instructions were given regarding the final preparations for the sudden departure from the city. This labor was taking so much of the President's time that he announced that they would discontinue the administration of the endowments in the temple so they would be better prepared for a hasty removal from the city when the weather got colder and the ice floes on the river would prevent the sending of boats upstream to carry militiamen to overtake them and return them to their city.

The next morning when President Young went to his office in the temple to meet with the brethren of the twelve and put the final touches on their plans for removal, he was amazed to see the building filled with eager people who wanted to receive their endowments that day. They seemed unmindful of the determination of the enemy to prevent the Mormons from leaving the city until the war clouds should drift away. Though the President was fearful that "the brethren would have us stay here and continue the endowments until our way would be hedged up, and our enemies would intercept us," he advised the large group in the temple that the Church would build other temples and the blessings of the Lord's house would then be enjoyed by the faithful. He reminded them that they had been abundantly blessed for having built the temple, even if the doors were now closed, and now they give their full time and attention to the matter of leaving the state.

He closed his speech by saying that he was going to set an example by leaving the temple at once, returning to his home and begin to load his provisions into the covered wagons that stood near his house. As he put on his heavy overcoat and beaver hat and walked from the building, none of the congregation followed his example. After he had walked a short

distance he looked back and was surprised that nobody had heeded his advice. He paused a moment, swallowed his words, and returned to the temple. Realizing how anxious his friends were to receive the blessings of the house of the Lord, an endowment session was quickly organized and the endowments were administered to 295 persons that cold day.

On the fourth day of February the first of the loaded wagons arrived at the wharf, to be loaded on flatboats and taken across the river. That day President Young was so busy supervising the departure from the city and the loading of dozens of other wagons with necessary supplies that no temple service was held that day. Though many other wagons followed the vanguard across the river on the following day, a multitude of anxious people prevailed upon the President to open the temple and let them receive the blessings of the Lord's house before they should join the caravan that was rolling across the river and beyond the frozen prairies on the Iowa shore. On that day 512 persons were endowed while a multitude of their brethren left the city in the bitter cold of that severe winter.

There was such a spirit of rejoicing in the large group that enjoyed the temple service that day, and so many thanked the President for the favor he had extended to them by opening the temple after he had resolved to devote his full time and attention to the matter of the exodus, that he was prevailed upon to offer the same favor on the following day. He was so concerned with the subject of leaving the city that he failed to count the number who were permitted to go through the temple that last day. Elder George A. Smith, however, recorded in his diary that "upwards of 600 received the ordinances" that final day. If we accept that number as the official and correct count for the day, the total number to be endowed in the Nauvoo Temple was 5,595 persons.

On the 7th day of February the group to be endowed was the largest session ever to go through the temple. At the close of that session the doors were closed and were never opened again for that type of temple service. No endowments were

given in Nauvoo after the 7th of February. Many marriages were performed in the temple that day, President Young having a wife sealed to him for time and eternity, but when the labors of the day were terminated it put an end to the regular temple service in that beautiful building.

After that time quorum meetings, prayer services, and general Sabbath services were held in the temple, but after the first week in February the blessings of the Lord's house were seriously restricted. The following day the twelve met in a solemn service in the temple. Regarding this valedictory service in the new building, President Young has written:

> We knelt around the altar, and dedicated the building to the Most High. We asked his blessing upon our intended move to the west; also asked him to enable us some day to finish the Temple, and dedicate it to him, and we would leave it in his hands to do as he pleased; and to preserve the building as a monument to Joseph Smith.

Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote in his diary at the time:

> I continued to minister in the Temple night and day, with my President and the rest of the Twelve, until early in February. Soon after these things the ministrations in the Temple ceased, and President Young, with the rest of the quorum and many others, bade farewell to their homes in the beloved city of Nauvoo, and crossed the Mississippi River.

Though the temple was not finished in every minute detail as it would have been had its builders intended to remain there and enjoy the fruits of their labor for many years, it was completed enough that the endowment was given to 5,595 of the Saints before they joined the caravan of covered wagons that stretched across the frozen prairies. For many months after the temple was closed for endowment service, many skilled workmen were employed in it in an effort to put the finishing touches upon its beautiful rooms even though they realized that it would soon be left in the hands of their foe.

Hundreds of private journals and family histories still in existence attest to these facts. Dozens of published diaries and

histories relate the same incidents. A few dozen accounts similar to the following, were published in the newspapers in the Illinois towns along the Mississippi:

> THE ENDOWMENT. — Last week, we stated that the Saints were receiving their endowment, which consisted in a total abrogation of the marriage contract. Later information confirms, to the fullest extent, this statement. The doctrine is that to those that have received their endowment all old things are done away and everything has become new. This is taken literally and applied to marriage and all other contracts.[2]

Though the newspaper accounts were seriously warped and filled with misrepresentation they were, nevertheless, numerous as the prejudiced editors tried to tell stories that they did not understand.

For many weeks while the endowment sessions were being conducted through the new building, the plasterers, painters, carpenters, and other skilled laborers were employed in the temple in other rooms that were not used for the endowment service. Others were busy laying carpets, hanging curtains and draperies, and putting the final touches of completion of the new building.

Many temporary features had been installed in the building to be used until the more elaborate and permanent features could replace them. After hundreds of endowments had been given, the permanent altars were installed on the 7th day of January, 1846. These altars were about two and a half feet high, and the same distance in length, and about one foot wide, rising from a platform about ten inches above the floor, which extended out in all directions about one foot. The altar and the platform were covered with thick cushions. Scarlet damask cloth was spread over the cushions. The upright walls of the altar were covered with white linen.

It was customary for those who attended endowment sessions to bring baskets of food for the ones who devoted their full time to the temple service. Many of the General Authorities of the Church practically lived in the temple, never going home

[2]Warsaw *Signal*, December 31, 1845.

except on Saturday night, and seldom sleeping more than four hours each night. Some of the sisters spent their full time in the building, cleaning the rooms in preparation for the service that was to be held, and washing and ironing the clothing that was used and getting them ready for the sessions that would be held the following day. There were many workers who depended upon the generosity of others for their food while they labored in the temple, so the ones who were privileged to receive their endowments were encouraged to bring some choice food for the laborers who spent so much time in the building.

It was also customary to hold a devotional service after the endowment session, never before, as is now done in the temples. After an appropriate program of music and preaching the ones who had been honored by attending the endowment session were served refreshments before they returned to their homes. Thus they were encouraged to bring a lunch for themselves and an ample store of choice foods to be served to the others who were employed in the temple every day except the Sabbath.

After a musical program in the temple on one occasion, President Young assured his listeners that "if Joseph Smith had been living, we should have already been in some other country, and we would go where we would be the old settlers, and build larger temples than this."

The activity of the enemy did not delay the building of the temple or discourage the Saints who had been commanded to build it. After Lyman Wight left the Church, he predicted that the temple would never be finished. As if to fulfil his own prophecy, he sent an agent to Nauvoo to burn the piles of lumber that stood on Temple Hill, waiting to be used. A guard was put on duty day and night to prevent the burning of the lumber.

This incident stimulated President Young to write another letter to the delinquent Wight, reminding him of his folly and utter failure if he should venture into the western wilderness

before the temple was completed and the endowment given therein. From his long epistle we quote these pertinent lines:

> Tithings come in for the temple more liberally than they have ever done before and with but a few exceptions the Saints are willing to give their all for the Temple, if required. There is every prospect of getting on the roof and finishing some rooms by next autumn when we shall commence administering the ordinances of endowment, according to the commandment.
>
> We intend commencing again on the Nauvoo House within a few days. All the Saints feel spirited and determined to carry out the measures of our martyred Prophet. There is no prospect of any mob at present, and all things bid fair for peace and prosperity.
>
> And now, dear brethren, if you will hearken to our counsel, you will give up all idea of journeying Westward before you have received your endowments in the Temple, you will not prosper. And when you meet with trouble and difficulty, let no one say that the counsel of the Twelve brought them into it, for we now, in the name of the Lord, counsel and advise you not to go West at present. We desire, dear brethren, that you should take hold with us to accomplish the building of the Lord's houses. Come brethren, be one with us, and let us be agreed in all of our exertions to roll on the great wheel of the kingdom.

After Sidney Rigdon left the Church, some of his disciples attempted to burn the temple lumber and thus prevent the building of the temple, but their efforts were in vain. The Lord had commanded that the temple be built, and nothing was to prevent that commandment from being fulfilled. In due time the building was completed and a few thousand of the builders were permitted to share its blessings.

Other groups that were not privileged to enjoy the endowment sessions were permitted to meet in the temple for other activities. Groups and quorums often met there for special prayer services before it was opened for the endowment service and after it had been closed to that activity.

At one of these popular prayer meetings in the temple, Elder Heber C. Kimball offered a prayer which was thus commented on by one of the scribes:

He thanked God for his great mercy and goodness to his people in granting them this opportunity of meeting together in the Temple, asking him that he would continue to bless them, that he would bless President Brigham Young with health and wisdom, that he might be able to lead and direct this people, and that the same blessings might be extended to all his brethren of the Twelve and all the Saints, and that God would bless the wives of the brethren and give unto them strength of body, that they might live and administer to the servants of God, that they might see three score and ten years, and behold the kingdom of God established in the earth, and that the Saints might be enabled to continue in Nauvoo in peace, until all the faithful Saints had received their endowments, and that when the time to leave Nauvoo should arrive, that they might be able to sell their possessions and obtain those things that they needed to enable them to go away in comfort; also, that God would bless their children, and all that pertained to the Saints.

It was a solemn day of triumph and rejoicing when the house of the Lord was completed and the sacred ordinances were administered to the faithful Saints who had labored through the long and weary months that the temple might crown the hill and make a holy city out of Nauvoo as long as its builders were permitted to remain in the new city and reap the harvest of their labors.

Chapter 7

MANY WITNESSES TESTIFY

Almost all the Saints who received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple went with the pioneers to the West. The ones who remained in Illinois and drifted completely out of the Church could not have instructed others in the important ritual, so they chose to ignore it. It became a common tradition among the apostates that the Lord had rejected the Church because the temple was not completed; that no endowments or sealings of any kind were ever administered in Nauvoo before the death of Joseph Smith or after; that the Saints chose to run away into the wilderness without completing the temple and receiving the blessings from heaven that were predicated upon the completion of that worthy project.

The descendants of the Prophet continue to insist that the Church was rejected for that reason, and that after a few years it was reestablished in the earth with the eldest son of the Prophet as its president. Yet they have been operating under these false pretenses for more than a century and have never built a temple or shown the slightest interest in the mission of Elijah or the revelations of the Lord regarding this vital institution. It seems a little strange that the Lord would reject the Church because the Saints had not kept their pledge and completed the temple, yet he would establish it anew with a faction that had not the slightest interest in the realm of temple building and service.

Many witnesses arose outside the Church who knew that the temple was sufficiently completed that the secret and sacred ceremony of the endowment was conducted therein. Others who had been in the Church for a season and had received the blessings of the house of the Lord, later left the Church but continued to repeat that the temple was completed enough that the

endowment was given to hundreds of the faithful members in Nauvoo.

Two weeks after the first covered wagons crossed the Mississippi, a newspaper in a neighboring town assured its readers that "the Saints have endeavored to keep the ceremony of the endowment perfectly quiet, but some of them have let the cat out of the bag." The article then related at some length what had been told about the ritual that was being conducted in the temple.[1]

This subject made popular copy on many a city desk and broke into print in a score of newspapers. A few people left the Church after going through the temple and spilled their words freely at the request of inquisitive editors. Newspapers from Missouri to New York City had much to say about this subject. They were unaware of the rumor that the temple was not completed and that the endowment was never given in Nauvoo and that the Church was rejected for that reason.

When the notorious John C. Bennett left the Church, he had much to say about this subject. His book was published in 1842, long before the temple was completed, so what he had reference to was the endowment that the Prophet gave to many of the brethren in his office above his store. He had a few pictures in his book showing how the room was decorated with twigs, boughs, and flowers to lend color and background to the ritual that was to be conducted. He assured his readers that the ones who received this blessing were clothed in "long robes and wore caps." Regarding this ceremony that was first administered on the fourth day of May, 1842, he wrote:

> The lodge room is carefully prepared and consecrated, and from twelve to twenty-four sprigs of Cassia, olive branches, cedar boughs or other evergreens are tastefully arranged about it. These are intended to represent the eternal life and unmingled bliss which, in the celestial kingdom, will be enjoyed by all who continued in full fellowship with "Order Lodge."...
>
> This is a secret lodge or society established by Joe Smith in consequence of a special revelation from Heaven, which he pretended to have received

[1] Warsaw *Signal*, February 18, 1846.

respecting it. . . . None but the very elite of the Mormons are admitted into this lodge, as the mysteries of the holy Priesthood are there, more fully than elsewhere explained to the members, who are initiated only after they have bound themselves by a most solemn oath to profound and inviolate secrecy. . . .

After the precious ointment has been poured upon the candidate, a whole is cut in the bosom of his shirt. . . . They believe that these shirts will preserve them from death and secure to them an earthly immortality.[2]

The apostate Bennett had so much to say about this subject, both in his book and to editors in various towns, that one would be obliged to believe that he had been permitted to receive the endowment at the hands of the Prophet in the spring of 1842. His quotations, however, illustrate how easily it was for false impressions and exaggerated statements to be repeated through the years.

When Governor Ford wrote a history of his state, he could not resist the temptation to repeat some of the popular gossip he had heard regarding this sacred subject. After consulting some of the apostates for his material he wrote these lines about this subject:

Joe Smith about this time conceived the idea of making himself a temporal prince as well as a spiritual leader of his people. He initiated a new secret order of the priesthood, the members of which were to be priests and kings temporarily and spiritually. These were to be his nobility, who were to be the upholders of his throne. He caused himself to be crowned and anointed king and priest, far above the rest; and he prescribed the form of an oath of allegiance to himself, which he administered to his principal followers. To uphold his pretentions to royalty, he deduced his descent by an unbroken chain from Joseph the son of Jacob, and that of his wife from some other renowned personage of Old Testament history. . . .

It was asserted that Joe Smith, the founder and head of the Mormon church, had caused himself to be crowned and anointed king of the Mormons.[3]

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[2]John C. Bennett, *History of the Saints*, pp. 272, 275-6.
[3]Thomas Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 321.

The Ford comments are typical of the misunderstanding and falsehoods that were being circulated regarding this institution, yet they are another link in the chain of evidence that the temple was completed and used for the purpose for which it was authorized.

After John D. Lee drifted from the Church and became very bitter, he told his life's history to some ghost writer who had the story published in a book. He had much to say about temple work in Nauvoo, and his report seems to agree with that of other qualified witnesses:

About the first of December, 1845, we commenced filling up the rooms for giving endowments. I assisted in putting up the stoves, curtains and other things. It was about fifteen days before we got everything ready. I must mention that when the doctrine of baptism for the dead was first introduced, the families met together, down by the river side, and one of their number, of the order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, officiated. They were baptized in behalf of all they could remember, the men for the men, and the women for the women. But when the font was ready in the Temple, which rested on the twelve carved oxen, they went and were baptized in it, after the same order, except that a clerk must make a record of it, and two witnesses must be present, and the name of the person baptized and for whom he or she was baptized, and the date of baptism, the clerk and witnesses entered in the register or record. All persons who are baptized must also be confirmed. Male and female alike pass through the same ceremony, and the fact entered in the record kept for that purpose. . . .

In many cases also, where men require it, their just debts must be settled before they are allowed to be baptized, washed and anointed. In the order of Endowment, a list is made out the day previous, of those who wish to take their endowments. Every person is required to wash himself clean, from head to foot. Also to prepare and bring a good supply of food, of the best quality, for themselves and those who labor in the House of the Lord. In the latter about twenty-five persons are required in the different departments to attend to the washing, anointing, blessing, ordaining, and sealing. From twenty-five persons are passed through in twenty-four hours.

I was among the first to receive my washings and anointings, and even received my second anointing, which made me an equal in the order of the Priesthood, with the right and authority to build up the kingdom in all the earth, and power to fill any vacancy that might occur.

I have officiated in all the different branches, from the highest to the lowest. There were about forty men who attained to that order in the Priesthood, including the twelve Apostles and the first presidency, and to them was instructed the keeping of the records. I was the head clerk. Franklin D. Richards was my assistant clerk. My office was in room number one, at President Young's apartments. I kept a record of all the sealings, anointings, marriages and adoptions.

I was the second one adopted to Brigham Young. I should have been his first adopted son, being the first that proposed it to him, but always ready to give preference to those in authority, placed A. P. Rockwood's name first on the list. I also had my children adopted to me in the Temple. Brigham Young had his children adopted to himself, and we were the only ones to my knowledge, that had our children so adopted at the Temple at Nauvoo. As time would not permit attending to all the people, the business was rushed through day and night. . . .

In the Temple I took three more wives — Martha Berry, Polly Ann Workman, and Delethea Morris, and had all my family sealed to me over the altar, in the Temple, and six of them received their second anointings, that is the first six wives did, but the last three we had not time to attend to.[4]

Another apostate, Increase Van Deusen, who had been through the temple in Nauvoo, wrote a large pamphlet in which he told about the purpose of the temple and the type of ceremonies that were administered therein. His material was published in 1847, going through several editions in America and England. It contained sixteen full page illustrations, painted by an artist at his direction, showing the various rooms that were used in the endowment, giving the name of the room and the decoration and scenery of each room so the scenery would blend with the ritual that was administered in that room.

From the Van Deusen publication we quote these lines:

When the foundation of the great Mormon Temple was laid, at Nauvoo, Illinois, Joseph Smith, then acknowledged Mormon prophet, issued a written proclamation or revelation to all his subjects on this and on the Asiatic continent, in which he stated that God had revealed to him certain mysteries, ordinances, ceremonial observances, etc., and commanded the people through him (the said prophet) to build a Temple,

[4]John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, pp. 168-170.

the object of which was to reveal the nature of those mysteries, the observance of which was essential to man's salvation. The condition upon which those mysteries were to be revealed was, that all subjects were to appropriate one-tenth of their property and labor during its progress until its final completion.

The building of this grand structure had been commenced about three years, when Joseph Smith, the prophet, was murdered, under circumstances already known to the public. This unexpected event threw the whole body, and especially those residing at Nauvoo, into immediate confusion, the principal members not knowing what course to pursue. They believed that the knowledge of the mysteries, the object for which the Temple was to be erected, had vanished with the death of the prophet, as a matter of course; for no one but himself ever pretended to possess the secret of the revealed mysteries. . . .

After a few weeks spent in conjurations and counselings with others of his interested associates, he (Brigham Young) prepared and issued a new proclamation, in which he stated that the former prophet, previous to his death, had revealed to him the true nature and objects of the "Endowment," and if they would finish the Temple, he would faithfully reveal all that the prophet Joseph would have done had he lived. The doors of the attic story were closed, and a secret preparation made by a few selected individuals for the great secrets which were to be disclosed, which were revealed by Brigham Young to about twelve thousand persons, during a period of three months, in the winter of 1846, and said to be a reward to those who assisted in the completion of this splendid edifice, which was erected at an expense of nearly one million of dollars.

Now the man that led twelve or fifteen thousand through this farce, has gone with the main body of the Mormons, to California, with the express understanding, to my certain knowledge, of carrying out these principles among the Western Indians, and all whom he has influence over. He told others that were at Nauvoo, those who were not let unto these Temple Mysteries, (for all did not go in for want of time and opportunity,) that when they got to California, there would be a tent pitched in the wilderness for the Indians' benefit and all others that had not an opportunity at the Temple at Nauvoo. The idea is, if they had not been driven from Nauvoo, all the Mormons in all the world would have gone there in their turn, and received their great anticipated blessing.

Thousands already under their influence, all calculating to go to that place, with an inducement that the Lord has, in the Nauvoo Temple, and will reveal great secrets, essential to their salvation.[5]

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[5]Increase M. Van Deusen, *The Sublime and the Ridiculous Blended*, pp. 11, 12, 21, 22.

In the autumn of 1844 James H. Hunt published his book on *Mormonism.* In the appendix he had much to say about the "spiritual arts and wiles which the initiated were sworn in the most solemn manner to never divulge what is revealed to them."

About the same time another book was published in New York City which said of this subject:

> A new kind of ceremony, appertaining to marriage, has lately been introduced into the municipal regulations of Nauvoo. Persons inclined so to do are married for the next world, as well as this. The ceremony is, therefore, performed in the alternative for time or eternity. Those married for time, have recently, we have been informed, been married a second time for eternity.[6]

Such statements as the above were common knowledge to half a hundred newspaper editors and an equal number of authors of books through the years. Many of them paused to discuss the ceremonies of the temple at length, adding the usual accumulation of false information and misrepresentation that seemed to increase with the passing years.

The Prophet's eldest son, as an old man, wrote his autobiography. Regarding this subject of marriage for eternity he had the courage and daring to relate what he had been told by a fond friend on this subject of marriage for eternity. We quote this conversation:

> "Did your 'celestial marriage' to your wife take place in the Temple?"
> "No, sir; the Temple was not finished then."
> "Did it take place in the Masonic Hall?"
> "No."
> "In the Brick Store office?"
> "No, sir."
> "Was it in a dwelling house?"
> "No sir; it was on the street."
> "How was that?"
> "Well, I had held conversations with your Uncle Hyrum, in which he taught me that married couples who felt that they were sufficiently

[6]Henry Brown, *The History of Illinois,* (1844), p. 398.

agreeable to one another in their married life together that they wished those associations to be continued after death could go before some high priest and be sealed for eternity, in order to assure the continuance on the other side of their ties as married companions. My wife and I had talked this over, and one day, riding in a buggy up Main Street, we met Brother Hyrum on his way home. At his suggestion, we stood up in the buggy, clasped our hands together, and he pronounced the ceremony uniting us as husband and wife for *eternity*, having already been married for *time*."

"Do you know of any other persons who were sealed in a similar way?"

"Yes, an elderly couple well past middle age, whose children were away from home, were sealed in my presence with this ceremony."[7]

In 1884, E. L. Kelley of the Reorganized Church interviewed the daughter of Sidney Rigdon, Nancy Rigdon Ellis, hoping to gain some information to refute the claims of the Mormons who were well aware of the fact that many sealings had been performed in Nauvoo before the death of Joseph Smith. Though the evidence that was obtained from Nancy was in full agreement with the traditions that had been so popular in Utah, they published her statement in their official magazine:

"When did you hear about sealings?"
"I heard about this first about the year 1842."
"What was this sealing and what was the purpose of it?"
"I cannot say that I ever understood it fully. I cannot give the object."[8]

One should not expect Nancy Ridgon to remember the full story of the secret endowment and other features of the sealing ceremonies, when the secret was so carefully guarded by those who had received these blessings. As a token of the manner in which these sacred ceremonies were regarded by those who received them, we may mention the fact that on the fifteenth day of February, 1844, four months before the death of Joseph Smith, Elder Erastus Snow made an entry in his diary in code. This remained a secret to the family for more than a century. During World War II his descendants who possessed the journal

[7] *The Saints' Herald*, March 17, 1936.
[8] *History of the Reorganized Church*, IV, 451.

gave it to the intelligence department of the United States Navy to have the message disciphered.

It recorded the fact that on that day he and his wife were sealed in marriage for this world and the next. The ceremony had been performed by Hyrum Smith.

Many of these sacred and secret ceremonies were misunderstood by some who witnessed them and by many others who heard about them. Typical of this popular misunderstanding is the following statement by William Marks after he became a disciple of James J. Strang. In July, 1853 he had a letter published in Charles B. Thompson's magazine, *Zion's Harbinger and Baneemy's Organ,* in which he said of the introduction of the temple ceremony in Nauvoo:

> . . . I was also a witness of the introduction (secretly) of a kingly form of government, in which Joseph suffered himself to be ordained a king, to reign over the house of Israel forever; which I could not conceive to be in accordance with the laws of the Church, but I did not oppose the move, thinking it none of my business.

Another apostate has left this testimony regarding the teachings of the Church authorities in Nauvoo at an early date:

> In the year 1843-4, at Macedonia, Illinois, father John Smith, aforesaid, instructed me in the things of the kingdom, and stated that Joseph fearing he would be killed before the mysteries of the Endowment were given, had given Endowment to twenty-four of the priesthood, with their wives in Nauvoo, Illinois. And having been shown the Endowment Garment and Robe by father John Smith, at the time aforesaid, and subsequently at Nauvoo, and in Utah having seen their Endowment Garments and Robes — I testify and say that to all appearances of style they are identical with those shown me by the said father John Smith.[9]

Temple Work among the Factions. It was no secret to many of the apostate leaders who started other factions of the church soon after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, that the temple was finished enough to accommodate hundreds of the Saints who were anxious to receive the endowment. Other

[9]Charles A. Shook, *The True Origin of Mormon Polygamy,* p. 170.

apostate leaders knew that the same ceremony had been administered to the leaders of the Church by Joseph Smith at least two years before his death.

Many of the apostate leaders sought to keep their disciples interested in the subject by introducing some type of temple activity, though most of the self-appointed leaders had never been privileged to receive the blessings of the temple in Nauvoo. Their man-made rituals were based on what they had heard regarding the ceremonies.

Lyman Wight led a small group of followers to Texas. He expressed a desire to build a temple there, but he died before his dream was realized. He continued to practise plural marriage and seemed very anxious to build a temple and introduce some of the ceremonies he knew had been practised in Nauvoo, as he had surely received the endowment under the direction of Joseph Smith.

James J. Strang, who had the largest following in the early apostate factions, devoted much time to the consideration of temple work, though he operated without divine authority or guidance. He realized that these sacred ceremonies had been administered by the Prophet himself in Nauvoo. Before the temple was finished and the endowment was given to hundreds in Nauvoo, Strang was baptizing for the dead at his rendezvous on Beaver Island, performing many sealings, and carrying out many other teachings he had heard about that related to the temple.

Strang dedicated a pool of water and was baptized in behalf of Oliver Cromwell. Baptisms for the dead were performed for hundreds of others in the northern wilderness before the temple was finished in Nauvoo. He also introduced the practice of plural marriage and the sealing of couples for eternal union. In most of their sealing records the husband is sealed to the wife, instead of the wife being sealed to the husband. Most of the married couples in their group were married for time and eternity, though Strang assumed the leadership of his apostate colony in the early summer of 1844. He certainly

was not influenced by the teachings of Brigham Young in that regard but based his philosophy upon the teachings and practices of Joseph Smith.

Strang had no regard for secrets, so he published much of his temple ritual in his pamphlets and books before the temple in Nauvoo was finished. Strang would say, and he certainly did every chance he got to discuss the subject, that it was sheer stupidity to argue that Joseph Smith did not introduce the temple ceremonies before his death.

Granville Hedrick knew enough about temple work in Nauvoo that the feeling was kept alive with his small flock through the years that in the future angels would return and introduce the subject again and insist that temples be built and used. They went to Missouri at an early date and purchased a part of the temple lot which they retain to this day. A few years ago one of their disciples, Otto Fetting, related that John the Baptist had appeared to him and had revealed the plan for building a temple in Independence, Missouri. They started to excavate for the building, but the project was never completed.

In 1938 Clarence L. Wheaton of the Church of Christ, and the Reverend Rupert Fletcher, president of another apostate faction, had a debate about the teachings of the original Church which was founded in 1830. Concerning this subject the Reverend Fletcher made this statement:

> In Nauvoo they established some sort of a kingdom of God, and they not only ordained Joseph Smith a prophet, but crowned him as king. They instituted secret orders, with secret oaths and penalties. The scriptures affirm that God does not work in secret chambers. . . . We find that the great body of the Church at Nauvoo were saturated with it, and they also went into those secret places and baptized for the dead, and by such ordinances they formed an alleged link between the living and the dead.
>
> And what did that system in Nauvoo lead them to? It led them across the plains into Utah, with all that plurality of Gods, and plurality of marriage and vicarious work for the dead.[10]

[10] *Wheaton-Fletcher Debate*, 1938, p. 126.

The spirit of Elijah has spread over the earth. It has inspired thousands who do not belong to the Church to seek out their genealogical records, yet no person without the priesthood and heavenly approval can administer the ordinances of the house of the Lord in their behalf. Many people completely destitute of heavenly approval and the Holy Priesthood insist that no temple work was ever done in Nauvoo, and that the temple was not finished, even insisting that the Church was rejected for these reasons.

Such false leaders, anxiously awaiting the coming of angels from heaven to instruct and authorize them in this important matter, will have to tarry for a long season before their dreams are realized. The angels have made their way to earth, fulfilling their assigned missions. The temple was completed in Nauvoo and 5,595 persons received the endowment there, as hundreds were sealed in eternal marriage.

The destruction of the Nauvoo Temple was a serious tragedy, yet the building was worth every cent it cost to build and all the anxiety, heartache, and adversity that was encountered during the process, that those worthy few were privileged to share the blessings of the Lord's house. The spirit of temple work did not perish in the flames that devoured the woodwork of the temple. From the ruins of that sacred building the spirit of Elijah found a welcome sanctuary in the hearts and homes of the Saints all over the world. For this reason the holy temples continue to multiply in the land.

Chapter 8

WHAT THE TEMPLE LOOKED LIKE

The temple was made of light gray limestone, nearly as hard as marble. The stone quarry was down near the river. The building was 128 feet long, 88 feet wide, and 65 feet to the roof. It was 165 feet from the ground to the top of the spire. It was one of the most impressive and magnificent buildings along the Mississippi.

There were thirty hewn stone pilasters, each two stories high, which cost $3,000 each because of the extensive skilled labor spent upon each one. Though they paid but about $4.00 for a twelve hour day for the skilled stone masons who wrought the artistic decorations on those tall stones, they were still expensive. At the base of each pilaster was a crescent moon carved in a giant stone, while fifty feet above it a stone of equal size crowned the pilaster. This was the sun stone, with its human face carved in the large stone, with rays of light extending from the full face to the edge of the stone. This was surmounted by two hands holding two trumpets. These sun and moon stones were typical of the different degrees of glory that await the human family after the resurrection.

The large rooms on the first and second floors were designed after the plan of the Kirtland Temple, with four tiers of pulpits or elevated seats in each end. The following pen pictures from visitors who saw the temple give us an idea of the beauty and majesty of the temple on the hill:

The former mayor of Boston, Josiah Quincy, visited Nauvoo a few weeks before the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. He later wrote extensively about his visit in that interesting city. Regarding the temple he wrote:

> The Mormon Temple was not fully completed. It was a wonderful

structure, altogether indescribable by me. Being, presumably like something Smith had seen in a vision, it certainly cannot be compared to any ecclesiastical building which may be discerned by the natural eyesight. It was built of limestone, and was partly supported by huge monolithic pillars, each costing, said the prophet, three thousand dollars.

Then in the basement was the baptistry, which centered in a mighty tank, surrounded by twelve wooden oxen of colossal size. These animals, we were assured, were temporary. The Temple, odd and striking as it was, produced no effect that was commensurate with its cost. Perhaps it would have required a genius to have designed anything worthy of that noble site.

The city of Nauvoo, with its wide streets sloping gracefully to the farms enclosed on the prairie, seemed to be a better Temple to Him who prospers the work of industrious hands than the grotesque structure on the hill, with all its queer carvings of moons and suns. This, however, was by no means the opinion of the man whose fiat had reared the building. In a tone half way between jest and earnest, the prophet put this inquiry: "Is not here a man greater than Solomon, who built a Temple with the treasures of his father David and with the assistance of Hiram, King of Tyre? Joseph Smith has built his Temple with no one to aid him in his work."[1]

Another visitor has written of the temple:

I visited Nauvoo in the spring of 1846, and witnessed much distress. The women and children were left behind the masses of the Mormons, and many of them were visited with sickness. The whole earth for a large space was covered with Mormon wagons starting to the Salt Lake.

I was in the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo and examined it. It was a large and splendid edifice, built on the Egyptian style of architecture, and its grandeur and magnificence truly astonished me. It was erected on the top of the Mississippi bluff, which gave it a prospect that reached as far as the eye extends over the country and up and down the river.

The most singular appendage of this splendid edifice was the font in which the immersion of the saints was practiced. It was circular, being about fifteen feet in diameter, and about eight in depth. It was composed, if my memory serves me right, of marble, and the fabric rested some six or eight feet from the floor, on the backs of twelve oxen. The heads of the cattle were turned out and the font resting on their backs. The head, horns, and the whole front of the oxen were beautifully carved in just and elegant proportions of the bovine animal. (The oxen were

[1]Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, p. 389.

carved, I presume, of wood and were painted as white as snow.) Their horns were beautifully proportioned. Rooms were prepared adjoining the font in which to dress and undress, preparatory to immersion, and arrangements were made to heat the rooms and the water in the baptismal font.[2]

When Governor Thomas Ford wrote his history of his state, he paused to write of the temple:

This Temple was not fashioned after any known order of architecture. The Mormons themselves pretended to believe that the building of it was commenced without any previous plan; and that the master builders, from day to day, during the progress of its erection, received directions immediately from heaven as to the plan of the building; and really it looks as if it were the result of frequent changes as could be produced by a daily accession of new ideas.

It has been said that the church architecture of a sect indicates the genius and spirit of its religion. The grand and solemn structures of the Catholics, point to the towering hierarchy and imposing ceremonies of the church; the low and broad meeting houses of the Methodists formerly shadowed forth abhorrence of gaudy decoration; and their unpretending humility, and the light, airy, and elegant edifices of the Presbyterians, truly indicate the passion for education, refinement, and polish, amongst that thrifty and enterprising people. If the genius of Mormonism were tried by this test, as exhibited in the Temple, we could only pronounce that it was a piece of patch-work, variable, strange, and incongruous.[3]

When Jacob Scott first visited Nauvoo, he wrote of this beautiful building, "The Temple exceeds in splendor and magnificence any building I have ever seen."

The historian, Thomas Gregg, wrote of the new building:

And the Temple was built, a handsome and imposing structure, at a great cost of money and labor. . . . "Holiness to the Lord" was artistically displayed in golden letters upon it; and from its commanding position on the bluff in the city, it could be seen for miles around, a beautiful and imposing structure.

An impious visitor from St. Louis saw the new temple on

[2]John Reynolds, *My Own Times*, pp. 586-7.
[3]Thomas Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 491.

the hill. He was as full of prejudice as was Governor Ford, so he wrote about the huge and artistic stones that represented the sun and the moon, "What idea this is meant to convey, we could not learn, though the impression is irresistible that the Church is built on moonshine."[4]

The editors in Palmyra, New York, were on the alert for publicity about the Mormons and their achievements long after they had left the state where the Church was organized. When the Church was more than twenty-five years old a Palmyra newspaper published this account:

THE DESERTED MORMON TEMPLE

A city of 18,000 inhabitants, among many other substantial buildings, a stately Temple erected at a cost of $750,000, has grown up and run to decay within the brief period of ten years! — a fresh warning against building on "sandy foundations."

The city is situated on the left bank of the Mississippi, in the state of Illinois, on a site gently and gradually sloping down to the water, but extending back over a prairie some two or three or more miles. It has had eighteen thousand inhabitants; it is now nearly deserted. Everything looks forlorn and desolate. Note half the buildings are occupied, and of these not half are half full. The stores are closed. The farms are running to waste, the streets are overgrown with grass, and everything tells of ruin and decay. A letter in the *Boston Courier* gives the account of the Temple:

Our first object, of course, was the far-famed Mormon Temple, which stands upon the top of the hill, and can be seen for some miles up and down the river. The first sight we had of it gave us a pang of disappointment, for it looked more like a white Yankee meeting house, with its steeple on one end, than a magnificent structure that had cost, all uncompleted as it is, seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. But as we approached nearer, it proved to be something worth seeing. It is nearly a mile from the landing, the most conspicuous, in fact the only conspicuous object in the city.

It is built of white lime-stone. The front is ornamented with sunken square columns of no particular style of architecture, having capitals representing half a man's head — the upper half — showing the forehead, and the top of the nose, and crowned with thorns, or perhaps what was intended for the points of stars.

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[4]Henry Brown, *History of Illinois*, p. 491.

Over the head are two bugles or horns, with their largest ends outwards, and the handles, or the upper side, forming a sort of festoon protection. On all sides of the Temple are similar columns and similar capitals. The base of each column is heavy, but in good proportion and of a fanciful design, which it would be difficult to describe.

There is a basement with small windows. Ten steps lead to the font and only one entrance to the main building. Three arches enable you to enter into a sort of vestibule, from which, by doors, you enter the grand hall, and at the side are the entries to the staircases, to ascend to the upper apartments.

The front of the Temple is apparently three stories high, and is surmounted by an octagonal tower or steeple, which itself is three stories, with a dome and having on four sides a clock next below the dome. There is a line of circular windows over the arched entrance, ornamented with carved work between each, and over that again a line of square entablature, on which is cut the following inscription:

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

built by

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Commenced April 6th, 1841

Holiness to the Lord

A similar entablature is on the front of the interior vestibule, over the doors of the entrance with the same inscription. The letters are gilt.

The man in attendance demanded twenty-five cents each as a fee showing us the Temple, and asked everyone to subscribe to a visitor's book. I looked over this book, and saw but two names of persons hailing from Boston for the last six months, neither of which was familiar to me.

We were then taken to the very top of the building, and enjoyed there, for sometime, a view of the surrounding country, which, of itself, well paid for the trouble of ascending, as the whole valley of the Mississippi for miles and miles lay exposed to view on the north and south, while the prairie lands of Illinois and Iowa, and Missouri, were to be seen at the east and west, overlooking the few miles lying near the shore in the latter state, and showing tortuous course of the Des Moines River for some distance.

Coming down, we were ushered into the Council Chamber, which

is a large, low room, lighted by one large half circle window at the end and several small sky-lights in the roof. On each side are six antechambers, said to have been intended for twelve priests, councillors, or elders, or whatever they have been called. The chamber itself is devoid of ornament, and I was unable to ascertain whether it was intended to have any, if it should have been completed.

In the entry on each side of the door to the Council Chamber, is a room called the wardrobe, where the priests were to keep their dresses. On one side was a room intended for a pantry, showing that the priests did not mean to go supperless to bed. Under the Council Chamber another large hall, with seven windows on each side, and four at the farther end.

On the lower floor was a grand hall for the assemblage and worship of the people. Over the window at the end, was inscribed, in gilded capital letters:

THE LORD HAS BEHELD OUR SACRIFICE:

COME AFTER

This was in a circular line corresponding to the circle of the ceiling. Seats are provided in this hall for the accommodation of thirty-five hundred people, and they are arranged with backs, which are fitted like the seats in a modern railroad car, so as to allow the spectator to sit and look in either direction, east or west.

At the east and west ends are raised platforms, composed of series of pulpits, on steps one above the other. The fronts of these pulpits are semi-circular, and are inscribed in gilded letters on the west side, PAP, PPQ, PTQ, meaning as we are informed, the uppermost one President of Aaronic Priesthood; the second, President of the Priests Quorum; the third, President of the Teachers Quorum; and the fourth and lowest, President of the Deacons Quorum. On the east side the pulpits are marked PHP, PHQ, PSR, and the knowledge of the guide was no better than ours as to what these symbolic letters were intended for.

We next descended to the basement, where is the far-celebrated font. It is in fact the cellar of the building. The font is of white limestone, of an oval shape, twelve by sixteen feet in size on the inside, and about four and a half to five feet deep. It is very plain and rests on the back of twelve stone oxen or cows, which stand immersed to their knees in the earth.

It has two flights of steps, with iron bannisters, by which you enter and go out of the font, one at the east end, and the other at the west end. The oxen have tin horns and tin ears, but are otherwise of stone, and a stone drapery hangs like a curtain down from the font, so as

to prevent the exposure of all back of the forelegs of the beasts. In consequence of what I had heard of this font I was disappointed; for it was neither vast nor gorgeous; everything about it was quite simple and unostentatious. The basement is unpaved, and on each side and at the ends are small alcoves, intended for robing rooms for the faithful.

The whole is quite unfinished, and one can imagine what it might have been in course of time, if Joe Smith had been allowed to pursue his career in prosperity.

After wandering about Nauvoo for some time, a small party concluded we should call on the widow of Joe Smith, the prophet, and dine with her — she now keeps a public house, at the sign of the "Nauvoo Mansion." We found her at home, and had considerable conversation with her. She is an intelligent woman, apparently about fifty years of age, rather large, and very good looking, with a bright sparkling eye, but a countenance of sadness when she is not talking; she must have been a handsome woman when some years younger. She answered all our questions as we sat at dinner, although some of them might have been rather impertinent under a strict construction of the rules of etiquette, with great readiness and great willingness. After obtaining considerable information, and fully gratifying a not altogether useless curiosity, we separated, highly pleased with our visit.[5]

Mr. J. M. Davidson, editor of the Carthage *Republican,* has left this description of the Nauvoo Temple:

There are not many pictures of the Mormon temple at Nauvoo that, according to our recollection, are correct. One on the lower corner of an old map of Hancock County comes nearer it, and is probably correct, says Mr. Davidson in the Carthage *Republican.* One picture, said to be authentic, gives the square front elevation, and three story spire as it was, but gives a comb roof 45 degrees back of it and an angel winging as a sort of wind-vane above the spire.

The comb roof is not right. The roof was so nearly flat that ourself and companion walked over it without difficulty or danger, approaching the sides where, grasping one of the chimneys, the sentries nearly ninety feet below looked like pigmies. It may be remarked that the southwestern corner of the temple stood as a magnificent ruin until 1865 or 6 — a sightly landmark for many miles around. The ruin, when we saw it in February, 1864, was said to be eighty feet high. It was torn down a year or two later for the stone in it, and the ground where the temple stood was converted into a vineyard.

[5]The Palmyra *Courier-Journal,* September 22, 1847.

The main entrance of the temple was on the west, fronting the river. There were three archways opening into a vestibule; from thence two large doors opened into the main audience room. We took no note of the size of that room. It seemed very large. At either end were preaching stands with rows of elevated seats leading up to them. These were for the dignitaries of the church according to rank. It is probable that the prophet and twelve apostles occupied the eastern stand, while some lesser preachers and dignitaries occupied the stand on the west.

The seats in the body of the chamber had movable backs that could be swung so that the bearers could face either stand, as the character of the service or standing of the preacher demanded. There had been inscriptions above these stands, as indicated by tracings on the wall, but, with other ornamentation, had been torn down by the Mormons themselves, no doubt. The vast room was substantially though plainly finished, and appeared to be in good repair and free from acts of vandalism. To one who had never seen anything larger than a country meeting house, this Mormon audience room presented a vastness and grandeur that was inspiring. Ourself and companion stood in the midst thereof like animate atoms in a desolate expanse where there were no other inhabitants.

"Gentlemen should precede ladies in going up a stairway," was the quiet remark of our fair companion. A seventeen year old youth is not supposed to have accumulated the fine art of Chesterfieldian etiquette. Much in etiquette is without reason or rhyme. In this case, however, the temple spire was an airy structure; the stairways were lighted and unenclosed, and the wind was blowing up there at a merry rate. Three or four flights of stairways brought us to the dome, from whence, through square openings on the east and west, from an elevation of something over 150 feet, a vast and beautiful expanse of country could be seen — the grand Mississippi sweeping in a semi-circle for many miles around the city. Venturing to crawl out on a narrow parapet, which had only the slight protection V-shaped turrets, and a small ladder was seen going up over the dome of a naked flag-staff (no angel on it — she was in the dome) and comfortably seated on the dome with his legs around the flag-staff was Charley McDowell!

Townsman W. C. Williams, who has lived in Hancock County all his life, says that when a boy he visited the Mormon temple often, and that the oxen supporting the baptismal font had their fore legs presented entire and fully half their bodies. It is probably an error that the oxen were of marble. The piece of head now in possession of Attorney J. D. Miller, of this city, looks more like the limestone of which the temple was built. . . .

Nauvoo in 1846. At the period of our visit in that year, the great Mormon temple was as near its completion as it ever attained; finished,

however, in all its grand proportions of size and height. The basement hall, in which was situated the baptismal font — itself a miracle of art and beauty, with its appointments of life-sized oxen in purest marble, the marble basin and elaborate railings — the preparation and reception rooms; the immense audience chamber above with its pews and changing backs, its immense altars and oratories, its gorgeous tapestry and motes in gold and silver, its ponderous chandeliers and the innumerable columns and frescoes that elsewhere bewildered the eye with their gorgeous beauty.

Of all these appointments we have such a vivid recollection that it seems but the rehearsal of a last night's pleasant dream. We were but a boy then, and venturesome. We could not do it now, — but then we climbed to the top of that vast dome and planting our feet around the lofty rod which supported the bronze angel, we viewed a scene of magnificence vast and varied in its scope — the immense river half circling the beautiful city, the towns and villages that dotted its shores for miles in either direction, the tasteful farms that stretched their uninterrupted lines of hedge and fence into the misty distance, and the grim cannon and the men who guarded them, shrunken into pop-guns and pigmies so far below our feet. Such is our recollection of the great city and its proud temple in 1846.[6]

From the journal of John Pulsipher we read this account of the Nauvoo Temple:

Most of the Saints, men and women, had the privilege of receiving their endowments, learning the order of the priesthood, and the fall and redemption of man, in the Temple, in the City of Joseph. Nauvoo was called by that name after the death of Joseph. I think it was in the month of January that I and my brother, Charles, received our endowments. The building was filled up in the nicest style. It was built according to the pattern that the Lord gave to Joseph. It was accepted of the Lord, and His holy angels have ministered unto many therein and now because of persecution we must leave it and in leaving it we leave a monument of our industry which has reared it in our poverty. It was the finest building in all the western country.

At the west end, about one hundred feet from the ground was the following inscription in large gold letters:

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, BUILT BY THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
COMMENCED APRIL 6TH, 1841.
HOLINESS TO THE LORD

[6]The Carthage *Republican*, February 25, 1864.

At the east end of the house, inside, was arched the following sentence:

"THE LORD HATH BEHELD OUR SACRIFICE, COME AFTER US."[7]

Dr. Thomas E. O'Donnell, professor of architecture in the University of Illinois, paid this tribute to the Nauvoo Temple:

Of all the structures erected by religious colonies in Illinois, the largest and most unique one was, no doubt, the famous Mormon Temple at Nauvoo. Although never fully completed on the interior, the exterior was essentially complete at the time the Mormons departed.

From the standpoint of architecture alone, it was a great loss to the state when the structure was burned. The architectural and decorative features involved in this temple were wholly different from anything in the state, and were it standing today it would be one of the most unique historical structures.[8]

Increase Van Deusen who had been through the Nauvoo Temple, but later apostatized, has left this description of the temple:

Then the Great Temple, which is unquestionably one of the finest buildings in the country. Its location is about in the centre of the city, on a hill that rises gradually from the river; it is built of white limestone quarried from the banks of the Mississippi. The architect's name is Weeks, under the superintendence of Joseph Smith. Hundreds of Mormons were employed on it, directly or indirectly, from its commencement. It is eighty feet wide, one hundred and twenty-eight feet in length, and from the ground to the extreme summit, it measures two hundred and ninety-two feet. It is after no particular style of architecture. It has a portico of three archways; is surrounded with thirty polished stone pilasters, at the base of which is carved a new moon inverted, while the capital of each is formed of a full head the whole breadth of the pilaster, projecting out from the building, representing the rising Sun coming out from a cloud, supported by two hands holding a trumpet. Directly under the tower, in front, is the following inscription in gold letters:—

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[7]N. B. Lundwall, *Temples of the Most High*, p. 59.
[8]*Illinois Historical Transactions*, 1931. Quoted by Inez Smith Davis, *The Story of the Church*, p. 294.

"The House of the Lord, built by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Commenced April 6th, 1841. Holiness to the Lord."

In the centre of the basement, which is the full size of the Temple, converging to the centre, is a baptismal font (the object of which I will briefly describe below), supported by twelve oxen as large as life, heads fronting out each way from the centre, executed in solid stone. Two stairways lead into the font from opposite directions. All around the outside of this main floor are small rooms, designed for a purpose I cannot here describe for want of room. On the first floor are three pulpits, and a place for a large choir; and on either side eight arched windows. Around the hall of the spacious attic, are twelve small rooms, each lighted with a beautiful circular window, and a massive lock on the door. The walls of the building are about six feet thick. The summit of this splendid edifice is gained by two winding stairways from the base. The probable cost is about one million dollars.

Thomas Gregg has left this description of the font:

The baptismal font was in itself a curiosity, and a fit accomplishment to the building. . . . The oxen had the appearance of being sunk in the floor half way to their knees and the font rested on their shoulders, their horns, heads, necks and shoulders being exposed to view outside. It was placed in the basement, or first story of the building — an object of great curiosity and comment to all stranger visitors.[9]

[9]Thomas Gregg, *History of Hancock County Illinois*, p. 373.

Chapter 9

LET MY PEOPLE GO!

If the state of Illinois should suffer a mob to drive us from this place, it would be like a man cutting off his own nose to spite his face; for it must be admitted that the taxes collected from this people make a great addition to the state revenue and will still increase. There are no signs of a mob here, after all the noise about it in the east. In short, the Saints here are prospering in everything beyond my expectations, and Nauvoo is the most beautiful place for a city that I ever saw.

—Benjamin Winchester

The *Times and Seasons* published this tribute to the thriving city with its new temple rapidly nearing completion:

NAUVOO

Blessed city, how I love thee;
Saints secure and blessed abode;
Where the good of every country,
Comes to seek, and serve the Lord.
Sure 'tis Zion, here's her temple;
Here's her Twelve, and high-priests too;
Here's her seventies, and her elders,
In the city of Nauvoo.

As the temple continued to rise in Nauvoo, and the camps of the enemies multiplied in the land, the politicians continued to demand the removal of the Mormons from the state. They even suggested a trek so long that the unpopular people would be far beyond the borders of the United States.

Governor Thomas Ford had offered this advice to the builders of the largest city in his state:

If you can get off by yourselves you may enjoy peace; but surrounded by such neighbors, I confess that I do not see the time when you will

be permitted to enjoy quiet. I was informed by General Joseph Smith last summer that he contemplated a removal west; and from what I learned from him and others at that time, I think, if he had lived he would have begun to move in the matter before this time. I would be willing to exert all my feeble abilities and influence to further your views in this respect if it was the wish of your people.

I would suggest a matter in confidence. California now offers a field for the prettiest enterprise that has been undertaken in modern times. It is but sparsely inhabited, and by none but the Indians or imbecile Mexican Spaniards. I have not inquired enough to know how strong it is in men and means. But this we know, that if conquered from Mexico, that country is so physically weak, and morally distracted, that she could never send a force there to reconquer it.

Why should it not be a pretty operation for your people to go out there, take possession of and conquer a portion of the vast country, and establish an independent government of your own, subject only to the law of nations? You would remain there a long time before you would be disturbed by the proximity of other settlements. If you concluded to do this, your design ought not to be known, or otherwise it would become the duty of the United States to prevent your emigration. If once you cross the line of the United States Territories, you would be in no danger of being interfered with.

Almost two years before the martyrdom of Joseph Smith and his brother, James Arlington Bennett had suggested this course to the Mormon leaders:

I would recommend to the Prophet to pull up stakes and take possession of the Oregon territory in his own right, and establish an independent empire. In one hundred years from this time, no nation on earth could conquer such a people. Let not the history of David be forgotten. If the Prophet Joseph would do this, millions would flock to his standard and join his cause.

From far and near, from foe and friend alike, came the suggestion to the builders of Nauvoo that they should leave the state and seek an asylum beyond the borders of the Lamanites. President Brigham Young had definitely promised his persecutors who sat in high offices that as soon as the spring of '46 should dawn upon the prairies they would leave the city of their dreams and plunge into the wilderness. Meanwhile, as the hour of

their departure approached, there grew in the hearts of certain politicians a spirit of fear and apprehension that all was not well in Zion, and that the Saints should not be permitted to get beyond the strong arm of the law, becoming lost in the western wilderness, ready to fall in with the British and the Mexicans along the Pacific and thus plague the nation that had offered them no protection against the mobbers, even asking them to seek a homeland close to the Pacific upon land that was owned by a foreign nation.

This spirit of fear was partly engendered by a letter which William Smith had written for the New York *Sun* soon after he was excommunicated from the Church. A fragment of his bitter tirade had this to say regarding his former associates and their plans:

> William Smith, brother of Joe Smith the Mormon Prophet, states that it is their design to set up an independent government somewhere in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains, or near California. That the plan has been maturing for a long time, and that, in fact, with hate in their hearts skillfully kept up by the Mormon leaders, whose pockets are to be enriched by their toil, the mass of the Mormons will be alike purged of *American* feeling, and shut out by a barrier of mountains and church restrictions from any other than Mormon freedom. That the design of Brigham Young and the Twelve is to build up a sacerdotal tyranny, the spirit of which will be more repugnant to the spread of republican principles than could possibly be the rule in Europe.
>
> They will be come formidable enemies to the United States, either in California or Oregon, and the government should look to the matter in season.

These malicious statements from a brother of the martyred president of the Church, sounded like gospel truth to the enemy. At the dawn of that historic year of decision — 1846 — rumors spread through the strongholds of the enemy that if the Mormons fled from Illinois and sought security in the distant West, they would surely go as enemies to the United States and seek fellowship and fraternity with the English settlers in the upper lefthand corner of the map or with the Mexicans if they tarried in the valleys of the Rockies.

This expanding nation was willing, almost eager to meet Mexico and England upon the field of battle at the same time, if necessary, to settle the boundary dispute. The American eagle had spread her broad wings, and all enemies must respect her with fear and trembling.

The new year dragged us to the verge of war with Mexico and England, so it was resolved that the Mormons would remain in Illinois until the war clouds should drift away and there would be no fear of these persecuted people mingling with the enemies of the United States as they crossed the nation in search of a new homeland.

As the new year dawned upon the frozen prairies, each week brought fresh rumors to the brethren in Nauvoo that the political leaders had decided not to let the Mormons leave until the war clouds had fled from the land. This is the reason that more work was not done in the temple. Their attention was divided in outsmarting the enemy and in finishing the temple and administering the blessings of the endowment therein.

As large companies went through the new building, their leaders spent many hours planning a surprise exodus from the city long before the schemes of the foe could be crystallized, and their plans be carefully worked out. On the second day of February, 1846, it was definitely decided to put everything in readiness for an immediate removal from the city, while the enemy was simply dreaming and boasting of a warm season in the coming spring when they would send a large military force to Nauvoo, declare martial law, and put an end to Mormon migrations westward until the war scare was all over.

The most precious penalty they had to pay for this early departure from their city was the loss of the blessings of the house of the Lord, since it would be closed the moment the caravans of covered wagons began to roll across the river. Though the preparations for the exodus were in full swing at the dawning of the new year, their plans did not close the temple or interfere with the Saints' enjoying the new building as the workshops continued to turn out equipment for the exodus. As hundreds

were employed in the workshops, other hundreds eagerly awaited the hour when they might go up to the house of the Lord.

The month of February blew in on a frigid wave of cold and snow. It was the Sabbath day and no endowments were given in the temple on that sacred day, but a public Sabbath service was held in the auditorium on the second floor. The next day 235 persons went through the temple. During the day the president suggested to the brethren that they get everything in readiness for a hasty departure from the city, as the enemy would surely be on the alert and try to stop them when they left.

For this reason they resolved to tarry until the severe winter settled down in dead earnest, freezing the river until it would be impossible for boats to carry militiamen up the river as far as Nauvoo. On the third day of the month, President Young recommended that they abandon the work in the temple and devote their full time and energy to the final preparation for the exodus. So many of the members who had not yet received their endowments were so reluctant to see the doors of the temple locked as they put everything in readiness for the exodus, that they did not share the opinion of President Young in that matter.

For days he had been carefully watching the weather and rejoicing in the fact that it was a colder winter than they usually had in that area. He also listened to the underground rumors that were filtering into the city, revealing the intentions of the mobbers and the political leaders. He was so anxious to commence the exodus and put his people beyond the reach of their bitter enemies, that he was willing to see the doors of the temple locked for a season in order to outwit the foe and take advantage of the severe cold and take thousands of the Saints out of the reach of their enemies.

He thought that he had dismissed the large congregation in the assembly room in the temple, having explained to them the wisdom in closing the temple and giving their full attention to the exodus and the final preparations that were necessary for that bitter migration in the dead of winter. He even promised

his listeners that they would build temples in the new homeland they would find in the distant West, and that they would have the opportunity to reap the fruits of their labor without their persecutors hedging up the way against them.

In a final effort to dissuade the congregation and send them to their homes that cold day, he said, "In this temple we have been abundantly rewarded, if we receive no more." He then considered the company dismissed, so he walked to the coat-rack, put on his heavy overcoat and his beaver hat, and walked out of the building, anxious to visit several workshops and see what must next be done in order to complete their preparations for the surprise exodus from the city. After walking a short distance in the bitter cold he paused to look back and perhaps strike up a conversation with some of the brethren nearest him, while to his utter amazement not a person had left the temple.

He could not overlook this token of their intense desire for the temple service that day, so he walked back to the new building and supervised the administration of the endowment to 295 persons.

On the fourth day of February the first of the loaded wagons crossed the river and bounced over the frozen ground in the direction of Sugar Creek. Each day thereafter others followed their trail in the deep snow that stretched toward the setting sun. It is reported that during the first night at Sugar Creek nine babies were born in the covered wagons of the Saints who were determined to get beyond the reach of their enemies. The winter was so severe that the various segments of the state militia in the towns and hamlets along the river and into the Illinois prairie, were not interested in leaving their own firesides and tramping through the deep snow and the bitter cold to intercept the migration of a persecuted people.

On the second Sunday of February the twelve met in the temple and again placed the temple in the hands of the Lord, asking his blessings upon the building during their absence and praying for the migrating Saints during that severe winter. They prayed that they might be able to complete it in the beauty

and elegance that it so richly deserved, at which time an official prayer of dedication would be said as the finished building would be presented to the Lord and then left as a monument to the martyrs Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

At a Sabbath service in the temple on George Washington's birthday, a large congregation assembled for the occasion, anxious to breathe a prayer for their kindred and friends who were out upon the frozen trail, and to beg for courage and strength for themselves as they should follow the vanguard into the white wilderness. The crowd was so great that the weight caused the truss floor to settle, causing some of the light timber underneath to crack with a loud noise. Some of the frightened people broke the window glass and jumped out of the second story windows. Two apostates who were present at the meeting leaped from the high windows. Both of them were injured in the fall.

Long after the first of the covered wagons rolled across the frozen river, the temple was open for Sabbath service and for prayer meetings, sponsored by priesthood quorums and other groups, but no endowments were given in the temple after the first week in February.

One of the exiles wrote these lines in his diary as they doubled up teams to draw the wagons over the first bluff beyond the Iowa shore:

> The silvery notes of the Temple bell
> That we loved so deep and well
> And a pang of grief would swell the heart,
> And the scalding tears in anguish start
> As we silently gazed on our dear old homes.

Another poet has written of the sorrow in the camp at Sugar Creek within sight of the city of Nauvoo:

> God pity the exiles, when the storms come down—
> When the snow-laden clouds hang low on the ground,
> When the chill blast of winter, with frost on its breath
> Sweeps through the tents like the angel of death!
> When the sharp cry of childbirth is heard on the air,
> And the voice of the father breaks down in his prayer,
> As he pleads with Jehovah, his loved ones to spare!

President Young assured the fleeing Saints that they would build other temples in their western Zion. In the summer of 1846, a year before he saw the Rocky Mountains, he predicted that the next temple would be built in the Rocky Mountains, and that the time would come when one of the twelve or a high priest would come up and ask, "Can we not build a temple at Van Couver's Island or in California?"[1]

Soon after the pioneers were established in their western Zion, President Young spoke these words at a conference of the Church:

> I was here and saw in the spirit the temple not ten feet from where we have laid the chief corner stone. I have not inquired what kind of a temple we would build. Why? Because it was represented before me. I have never looked upon that ground, but the vision of it was there. I see it as plainly as if it was in reality before me. . . . It will have six towers instead of one. . . . The time will come when there will be one in the center of temples we shall build, and on the top, groves and fish ponds.[2]

As temples multiply in the land today, we are not unmindful of the great price that was paid to usher in this era of temple service. As the spirit of Elijah sweeps through the earth and thousands become deeply interested in genealogical research and temple work, we must not forget the sacrifices that the early Saints made in Ohio and Illinois that we might reap the harvest of their labors. We should be doubly grateful that the day is past when we build temples for the enemy to possess and defile. No longer do we sow that another may reap the harvest.

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[1]*Journal History*, July 15, 1846.
[2]*Journal of Discourses*, I, 132.

Chapter 10

THE TEMPLE FOR SALE

The brethren could not forget how the Kirtland Temple had been defiled after the Saints were driven from Ohio. They were determined to protect the Nauvoo Temple against a similar fate. Moreover, a vast amount of money was needed to transport about 20,000 people across the nation, so the leaders dreamed of selling their possessions in Illinois, even the house of the Lord, in an effort to provide for the pilgrims who were anxious to cross the frozen prairies and risk their lives among the Indians of the western wilderness rather than to continue to suffer abuse from their white neighbors along the Mississippi.

Furthermore, they were convinced that the temple would be safer and more secure in the hands of some responsible society, church, or civic organization rather than to be left unoccupied, unused, unwanted by those who should inhabit the deserted city. Such an ownership, even on a short-term lease, would protect the sacred building from vandal hands and profane persons who would delight to plunder or desecrate the new building. The brethren even contemplated a long-term lease on the building it they found it impossible to sell it.

Thus it was decided to offer the building for sale and see their investment in the hands of some responsible and respectable group, while the revenue from its sale or lease would help to sustain the lives of the exiles as they fled across the nation. This is not to be regarded as an impious or sacrilegious scheme, smacking of simony, nor is it a mercenary plan, but a wise method of preserving the sacred structure. Aware of the bitter spirit of mobocracy that filled the area, the plan for selling the temple was a means of protecting it against the enemy, while at the same time the money derived from its sale would sustain life upon the plains.

Long before the prayer of dedication had resounded through its tall rooms, plans were formulated for the sale of the new building. Missionaries and other agents for the Church were instructed to seek for purchasers of the building on the eve of the exodus. They also tried to sell all their possessions in Kirtland, including the temple.

This subject made headline news in most of the newspapers in the area, as much publicity was given to the project. A newspaper in Burlington, Iowa, published this account of the proposed project:

Nauvoo. A friend, who was at the holy city the first of the week, informs us that all is peaceable and quiet there — that the Saints are making preparations to remove — but at the same time are finishing the Temple, putting in the carpets, etc., and intend to have a bell and when all is completed will endeavor to rent it to some respectable society. . . .

As long as it stands, the Temple will continue to be a great attraction of the upper Mississippi; and it is supposed that the purchaser might realize at least one half the annual interest on the money invested, by a small charge levied upon strangers for admission.

It is certainly an extraordinary specimen of human skill and industry; and so well appointed in its arrangements, that it can be made available for other purposes than those for which it was intended. As a college edifice it would stand unrivaled either in America or Europe.[1]

At the same time the St. Louis *American* told its readers:

The *Cincinnati Commercial* says that Almon Babbit, Esq., authorized agent for the Mormons, is now in that city, his business being to see Bishop Purcell, to effect a sale of the Mormon possessions to the Catholic church. The same paper adds that Mr. Babbit has as good as effected the sale.

A paper in far-off Missouri carried this article about the temple:

If any wealthy individual can be found who has a thirst for immortality he can slake it by purchasing this great edifice for some literary,

[1]The Burlington *Hawkeye,* November 20, 1845.

religious or charitable institution. It can be had for less then one-fourth of the amount that would be required to erect a similar structure; and if bought on speculation, could probably be sold at a great advance in a few years. . . .

This strange sect have regarded the completion of the Temple as a religious obligation imposed upon them by the Almighty; and as far as we can understand the matter, their doctrines inculcate the superstition that the nonfulfillment of this high duty will subject both themselves and "their dead" to the rejection of the court of Heaven in *future.* Hence the great efforts that have been made to complete their *offering.*

The Temple is now considered as finished. We were surprised upon inspecting it a few days ago, to perceive how much had been accomplished in a month. The appearance of the basement hall, in the midst of which stands the baptismal font, has been entirely changed by a laborious use of the trowel, and the "animals" now show a great advantage in contact with the tiled floor. The grand hall designed for the congregation is worthy of attention of all architects in originality and taste. It has been thronged by visitors from abroad since its completion, and excites the surprise and admiration of every beholder.[2]

The Hancock Eagle announced that the Catholic Church would purchase the temple on condition that the "new citizens" would guarantee its safety against mob violence. No person would make such a heavy investment unless the mob spirit could be smothered. The exodus of the builders of Nauvoo had not allayed the insatiable thirst for pillage and vandalism. When wealthy prospects viewed the great building which was offered at a fraction of its value, they sensed the grave danger from mob violence.

A newspaper in Quincy announced:

There are now three separate negotiations going on in relation to the Temple, in one of which the bargain was struck before the present difficulties, and they fear that this state of things will prevent a sale.[3]

From St. Louis came the advice that the "new citizens" in Nauvoo should put an end to violence so that large investments would be safe in the city.[4]

[2]*The Missouri Whig,* May 21, 1846.
[3]Quincy *Whig,* September 16, 1846.
[4]St. Louis *New Era,* June 23, 1846.

Another newspaper in St. Louis offered this advice to the citizens of Nauvoo after the exodus:

During the past week, says the *Hancock Eagle*, a good many strangers have arrived; and there has been some inquiry regarding the purchase of property. Many transactions would be closed immediately, if the Regulators ceased their hostile attitude toward the city. Either by design, or a singular coincidence, whenever things become settled among us, and sales are going on briskly, the mob are sure to commence their depredations. The Temple would have been sold long ago together with all the other Mormon property, if we could have had peace.[5]

The records of the Church contained many entries about the proposed sale of the temple. The day that the first endowments were given in the temple, December 10, 1845, this entry was made in the records:

Messrs. Tucker and Hamilton, Catholics, were admitted into the Temple to an audience with the Quorum of the Twelve and a few other brethren.

The propositions for sale of the lands of the Saints were handed by Brother Orson Hyde to Father Tucker, who perused them and handed them to Father Hamilton, his colleague. President Brigham Young gave them an explanation of the design of the rooms in the Temple, with which they seemed well satisfied.

Father Tucker said he thought it would be wisdom to publish the propositions of the Saints in all the Catholic papers and lay the matter plainly before their people. He should also think it advisable for the Catholic Bishop to send a competent committee to ascertain the value of the property, etc. At the same time they would use all their influence to effect a sale as speedily as possible.

Father Tucker thought they had men in St. Louis, New York and other cities who could soon raise the amount the Saints wanted, but that time was so very short that he did not know whether it could be done so soon. He asked if the Saints would be willing to have their propositions published in their papers.

President Brigham Young answered that they would have no objection, providing it was understood that the Saints reserved the right to sell when they had the opportunity.

Father Hamilton wished to ascertain upon what conditions they could obtain two of the public buildings, one for a school and one for a church.

[5]St. Louis *American*, August 26, 1846.

They intended to write to the Bishop and wished to be able to supply him with some information on this subject.

President Brigham Young said that he was well aware that there were many men in the Catholic church who could furnish all the money the brethren wanted immediately, but he supposed it was with them as it was with a Mr. Butler, a wealthy banker, who, when asked why he did not sign off more bills, replied it was a good deal of trouble to sign off bills.

Perhaps it was too much trouble to dig their money out of their vaults, but the president wished it distinctly understood that while the Saints made liberal proposition to dispose of their property, they must have the means to help themselves away.

President Brigham Young said he would like to add another proposal before they are presented for publication, to this effect, that if a party agreed to them the Saints would leave them the Temple for a period of from five to thirty-five years, at a reasonable price.

The council agreed to the amendment, which was accordingly added to the proposals and handed to Father Tucker.

One month later this notation was added to the record:

A letter was received this morning from Father Tucker, informing the brethren that the Catholic Bishop could not raise enough money to purchase their property; they would either purchase or rent one of their public buildings, but would not insure it against fire or mobs.

As the prospective purchasers visited Nauvoo and caught the spirit of the mob that was very apparent, they soon lost all interest in a heavy investment in the city. Elder Orson Hyde had contacted a wealthy Catholic bachelor in Georgia who seemed very anxious to pay $200,000 for the temple and also purchase many farms and houses in the deserted city, but the moment he made a thorough investigation of the project he refused to risk an investment because the enemy was boasting that they intended burning the temple so that it would not tempt the Mormons to return.

The reason for the proposed sale of the building was well summarized by the historian who recorded these lines:

Elder Hyde expressed his fears that the Temple might fall into the

hands of our enemies, as borrowed means were being called for, and numerous obligations were rolling in upon the trustees without means to liquidate them. Elder Hyde asked if it would not be better to sell the Temple at Nauvoo and also the Temple and Church property at Kirtland, Ohio, and with the proceeds assist the Saints to emigrate westward.[6]

Into the record of the Church went this notation long after the vanguard of the pioneers had arrived on the Missouri River:

We still have a prospect of making a sale of the Temple, and also of all the Mormon interest in Hancock County, and that for cash down. Brothers Babbitt and Heywood have started to St. Louis this morning to receive any propositions that might be made for deliberation. Our means are running so low that unless we can sell the Temple we shall not be able to meet all demands and help the poor away. . . . In case we sell the Temple we will visit you and bring you some funds.[7]

This optimistic spirit was the result of idle dreaming and hopeful wishing. Their needs were so great that they could not cease to dream of what a blessing it would be if their possessions could be sold, and a vast fund provided for transporting their members across the country. There had really been no change of plans with the Catholics and any other prospects who had been interested in the project. As their agents had sensed the mob spirit in Nauvoo they were determined not to make any investments in that unpromising area. The Church was not able to sell or lease either of the temples, nor were they able to sell a substantial amount of their vast holdings in real estate in Illinois or Ohio.

Before the temple was finished and the first endowments given in the new building, the brethren had discussed the advisability of selling or leasing the sacred building in order to preserve it. In the summer of 1845 President Brigham Young had said that he scarcely expected to see the building purchased, since it would involve the raising of such a large sum of money. He then concluded that, "We are willing to loan the use of it,

[6] *Journal History*, April 26, 1846.
[7] *Ibid.*, July 6, 1846.

with other public property to a respectable community who may occupy the city."[8]

Soon after the twelve had reached Winter Quarters on the Missouri, it was recorded in their record that:

> The council decided that the trustees might sell the Temple at Nauvoo and Kirtland, Ohio, and all other property of the Church and help the poor Saints to move westward. The council considered that the Temple would be of no benefit to the Saints, if they could not possess their private dwellings, and when the time should come that they should return and redeem their inheritances they would then redeem the Temple also; that a sale would secure it from unjust claims, mobs, fire and so forth, more effectually than for the Church to retain it in their hands.[9]

As thousands of the migrating Saints gathered along the Missouri, their leaders realized what a great undertaking it was to move a large population across the continent, and the vast amount of money it would require for the enterprise. Thus through the long months as they dreamed and planned about the journey into the Rockies, they hoped that their numerous possessions and dwellings in Illinois might be sold for a reasonable sum, and the money spent upon the exodus to their land of promise in the Great Basin. For months the thoughts of the leaders of the Church dwelt upon this problem of selling the temple and securing funds for the long journey.

On Sunday, September 27, 1846, at Winter Quarters it was again voted that the Nauvoo Temple and all the Church property in the city and in Kirtland be sold and the proceeds from the sale be spent in helping the poor Saints out of Nauvoo and into their Zion in the far West.

The following day it was recorded in the minutes of the conference meeting that:

> The Church here in general council with us this day voted that the Temple, and all Church property at Nauvoo be sold as opportunities present, if thought best by, and at such prices as the judgment of the

[8] *Ibid.*, September 25, 1845.
[9] *Ibid.*, April 27, 1846.

trustees shall dictate, the avails to be appropriated to relieve the necessities of the suffering poor Saints, and paying the labor on the Nauvoo Temple, and the residue as we shall counsel; but, let your funds be ever so great, pay no more money to the Gentiles on old debts.

We hope we will make some ready sales, which will enable you to give immediate relief, and send the poor to some desirable location for the time being.

As you will have no further use for the Temple bell, we wish you to forward it to us by the first possible chance, for we much need it at this place.

One of the trustees who remained in Nauvoo to assist with the sale of property, wrote to President Young, June 26, 1846, informing him that:

Brothers Babbitt and Heywood have started to St. Louis this morning to receive any propositions that might be made for deliberation. Our means are running so low that unless we can sell the Temple we shall not be able to meet all demands and help the poor away. I hope that God will favor the project, for I do assure you that Nauvoo is becoming anything but desirable. Brothers Markham and Snow will be off for the camp shortly. In case we sell the Temple, we will visit you and bring you some funds, but Mr. Paulding, the principal, desiring to buy is in New Orleans, and it will therefore require at least some five or six weeks to close matters and receive the pay.

The above letter was addressed, "Nauvoo, Temple of God." The mission to St. Louis proved to be a fruitless one, however, in spite of the desire of the brethren to sell the new building and raise some funds to help take the exiles to their mountain retreat in the distant West. A letter from President Young advised the agents in Nauvoo that in case they made a sale to guard the money with caution, and not to purchase any more horses or oxen, as the brethren on the Missouri had all the animals they needed at that time. "Keep your monies safe," he advised, "paying off the Temple hands, etc., and come and see us without delay. If more teams are needed hereafter, money will be worth five times as much to us, where we shall be, as it now is at Nauvoo."

A letter from Almon W. Babbitt from "The City of Joseph," explained that their trip to St. Louis resulted in disappointment and discouragement, and that it looked utterly impossible to sell either of the temples or the farms and dwellings the Saints had left unsold. Before the long summer put an end to the dreams of the brethren regarding the raising of funds to finance the expedition into the Rockies, President Young advised his agents in Nauvoo "to sell the Church property at Nauvoo without delay, at wholesale and get $125,000." He advised them to redouble their efforts to dispose of the Church property in Kirtland, that there might be fewer graves along the trail they should follow from the Mississippi to the Rockies.

Lawsuits in both cities prevented any sales even when they found an interested purchaser, yet the brethren at their rendezvous on the Missouri could not cease to yearn for the sale of the choice possessions in order to insure the safety of the temples and to provide funds for the journey westward.

The mob spirit abounded in Nauvoo until no investor would risk a heavy investment in that uncertain place. The jealous enemies in the hamlets along the river and upon the Illinois prairie were determined to drive the old, decrepit Mormons from the city so that the spoils of victory would be richer for them. On the eve of the "Battle of Nauvoo," there was simply no chance to sell any of the church property and secure the necessary funds for helping the poor Saints away from the city and across the plains to their Zion in the mountains.

As the summer of 1846 advanced toward the threshold of autumn, President Young continued to speak and write and pray about selling the temple, the Church property in Kirtland and Nauvoo, and the private possessions of the Saints in both cities. The agents in Nauvoo insisted that the price of the Nauvoo Temple should not be reduced from the figure they had first announced — $200,000. In one of their many letters from the City of Joseph, they closed with this line, "If we could effect a sale of the temple and be enabled to wind up the abomination of desolation."

With the coming of winter they did not cease to long and dream about selling their numerous and valuable possessions. When the spring of 1847 brushed the snow from the Illinois prairies and a vanguard of pioneers was ready to leave the Missouri and push into the Great Basin, Almon W. Babbitt was on an extended tour of the eastern cities, searching for wealthy investors who would purchase the temples the Mormons had for sale. After weeks of inquiry and solicitation he returned to the deserted city of Nauvoo, his mission a fruitless one.

On the day that officially ushers in the season of spring he was back in the city and wrote a letter to President Young in which he expressed this thought which continued to thrive in his determined mind:

> We still entertain a hope (walking by faith and not by sight all the time) that when the spring shall advance, the Lord will put it into the heart of someone to purchase the temple that we may get through with our mission here and soon be able to join our brethren in the West. I hope in case you leave before we sell the temple, you will either visit us or write us our instructions what we are to do with surplus funds, and particularly with ourselves.

Another letter from Brother Babbitt soon after his return to Nauvoo, contained this advice:

> I got home from the east about two weeks since. I was in every city in the eastern land, but could effect no sale of the property here, or at least for any price that we could entertain. The most that I could get offered for the whole property, including the Temple and Kimball's and Wells' property was $100,000; that price we can get here, I think, if we will take it.
>
> I dread the thoughts of staying here to retail it out. For I had made up my mind to go west this spring. There have been some forty suits of different kinds against the Trustees, some for old Kirtland money, one against you by attachment for Kirtland money. Galland has commenced a suit in Chancery, as well as at common law. All these are impediments against the sale of the property. I believe that Nauvoo will have a longer tail to wind up than Kirtland had, which has no end. I sold the farm in Kirtland and some other property, but an attachment

was laid on the premises about the time of the sale and stopped the payment.[10]

The winter of '47 drew its weary length slowly away with no prospect of a sale of the temple in Nauvoo. By that time most of the faithful members of the Church were fairly well established in the wayside stations along the trail that stretched across Iowa — Garden Grove, Mount Pisgah, or at the large encampment on the Missouri. If the Saints could survive two winters without the filthy lucre of the gentiles, they could surely face the future without any paltry coins from the enemy. They had practically decided that they must make the trip into the distant mountain valleys without any financial help from the enemy who had filtered into their deserted cities to take possession of the abandoned property.

They had resolved to go up to Zion, to the mountain of the Lord's house without riding upon the shoulders of the Philistines or being carried in wagons purchased with gentile money. At that late hour they had become convinced that it was impossible to sell their possessions in Illinois and Ohio and receive a penny from their persecutors.

At that time, on the eve of the exodus from Winter Quarters, they gave up the prospect of selling the temple and bartering with the enemy for a farthing when a talent was desired and deserved. When the vanguard of the pioneers was ready to leave the Missouri and push into the western wilderness as soon as grass grew and water ran from the last fragment of the carpet of snow, President Young took a determined stand that the temple should not be sold.

Almon W. Babbitt had made the long journey across Iowa to consult President Young before the first of the pioneers departed for the West. At that meeting the president was firm in his views that the temple should not be sold.[11]

One week after the vanguard of the pioneers left their encampment on the Missouri, the president wrote a document

[10] *Ibid.*, April 5, 1847.
[11] M. F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, p. 327.

which definitely closed the door on the sale of the Nauvoo Temple. He wrote at that late hour as if he were half ashamed for ever entertaining the idea that the temple should have ever been offered for sale to the gentiles. He seemed anxious to apologize for having offered to sell the sacred sanctuary, chagrined for having sought to sell the house of the Lord in the mercenary marts of the enemy. This is the epistle of apology that he sent to his agents in Nauvoo:

> Has the Lord turned bankrupt? or are his children so needy that they are obliged to sell their Father's house for a morsel of bread? and if they should sell, how much would they get after they had paid some millions of unjust debts, mortgages, cancelled claims, demands, attachments, fines, forfeitures, imprisonments, massacres, lawsuits, judgments and the whole etceteras that united mobocracy could bring against you before you could get one dollar removed from the vault to a place of safety.
>
> We leave you to answer this question, and advise you, according to your request, to repair forthwith to this place, with all your surplus funds, books, records, papers and movable effects belonging to the Church, and let nothing be lost . . . and when here we will be ready for further council and the way will open up for you to do much more good than where you now are, and you will soon learn that it will be much more for the content of the Saints to build two temples than to sell one.
>
> And while we are building, and mobocrats are left alone for a season, they will have to get their learning by their wisdom, for they will not have the Saints among them to trouble them, and an enemy is always at peace when he has nothing to contend against.
>
> Come then, and the Lord will bless you in so doing. And we wish you were here ready to go with us to a place of peace and safety, and then we would all be ready to do each other good, and in a situation to roll on the great cause of Zion. And if we get no other reward for past labors, we have left monuments which will memorialize the diligence of the Saints forever — a greater glory than safes of gold.

Even after President Young had gone with the vanguard of the pioneers to the Rocky Mountains, and had returned to Winter Quarters, the thought continued to linger in his mind that the enemy would never cease to yearn for the destruction of that sacred building. He seems to have continued to think

that to lease the building to some responsible and respectable society would insure it against mob violence. In the late autumn of 1847 he wrote a letter to the agents in Nauvoo in which he offered this advice:

> We have had an interview with Elder Fullmer, one of your number, and learned particularly your situation, prospects, progress of affairs at your place and decide unanimously that you gather up all the books and papers pertaining to Church property as you can, and as many of the poor Saints, and gather to this place in season to start with the spring emigration, leaving the Temple of the Lord in the care of the Lord into whose hands we committed it before we left, and let the owls and the bats revel in the habitation of the Saints in Nauvoo until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled, or until the Lord wills it otherwise.
>
> See to it without delay and know assuredly that Esquire Edmunds does redeed the Temple at Kirtland to the trustees and have the proof positive before everyone of you in the certificate of the clerk at the office where the deed is deposited, sending us a certified copy thereof the first possible moment and presenting us with the original on your arrival. . . .
>
> If you do not rent the Temple before you leave, we recommend that you leave the lease and charge of the Temple with Judge Owens that he may take care of it and see that it is preserved, and rent it, if he has the opportunity, or if it is necessary for its preservation.

It was utterly impossible to rent or sell the temples at Nauvoo and Kirtland. Not a farthing was ever recovered from those two buildings. They remained with the conquerors, as did the dwellings and farms of the Saints, as spoils of victory.

Chapter 11

THE TEMPLE DEFILED

After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow with harvest,
No King George of England shall drive you away from your homesteads,
Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your farms and your cattle.

—Longfellow

And they took the women captive, and the children, and the cattle they possessed. And they built the city of David with a great and strong wall, and with strong towers, and made it a fortress for them;

And they placed there a sinful nation, wicked men, and they fortified themselves therein: and they stored up armor, and victuals, and gathered together the spoils of Jerusalem;

And laid them up there; and they became a great snare.

And this was a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and an evil devil in Israel. And they shed innocent blood round the sanctuary, and defiled the holy place.

And the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled away by reason of them, and the city was made the habitation of strangers, and she became a stranger to her own seed, and her children forsook her.

Her sanctuary was desolate like a wilderness, her festival days were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach, her honors were brought to nothing.

Her dishonor was increased according to her glory, and her excellency was turned into mourning.

—1 Maccabees 1:34-42.

Before the builders and defenders of Nauvoo had reached the Missouri, the mob spirit was rampant in the land of Illinois. The war with Mexico had called all segments of the state militia to the southern battlefields, leaving no armed force to discipline the mobbers even if the governor were loath to authorize them to rout the mob and preserve the peace. The desolate city contained but a meager fragment of its original population by the summer of 1846 — the aged and infirm and the poor who were

not able to march with the strong and able-bodied as the numerous caravans rolled out of the city. A few apostates lingered in the abandoned city, anxious to fellowship with the enemy as they came to plunder and enjoy the spoils of victory.

Governor Ford wrote of the complete preparations that were made for the exodus from the city and the vast number that emigrated from the state:

> During the winter of 1845-46 the Mormons made the most prodigious preparations for removal. All the houses in Nauvoo, and even the temple, were converted into workshops; and before spring, twelve thousand wagons were in readiness. The people from all parts of the country flocked to Nauvoo to purchase houses and farms, which were sold extremely low, lower than the prices at a sheriff's sale, for money, wagons, horses, oxen, cattle, and other articles of personal property, which might be needed by the Mormons in their exodus into the wilderness.
>
> By the middle of May it was estimated that sixteen thousand Mormons had crossed the Mississippi and taken up their line of march with their personal property, their wives and little ones.[1]

With the city practically vacated by its founders, there was no force to repel the mob and protect their vacant dwellings that had not been sold. They were not able to keep the enemy from taking possession of the temple.

Elder Thomas Cottam visited the deserted city in the summer of 1846, and wrote these lines to a friend:

> I found Nauvoo, but oh, how desolate! The houses uninhabited, the once beautiful gardens full of weeds; peach and apple trees broken, and fences down; instead of peace and happiness there was ruin and desolation; but cease my soul, mourn not over the desolation of this place. I look forward for more happy and glorious days.

That same summer the famous English journalist, Charles Lanman, visited Nauvoo. He wrote these lines about the deserted city:

> The "Mormon" city occupies an elevated position, and, as approached

[1]Thomas Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 412.

from the south, appears possible of containing a hundred thousand souls. But its gloomy streets bring a most melancholy disappointment. Where lately resided no less than 25,000 people, there are not to be seen more than 500; and these, in mind and body, and purse, seem to be perfectly wretched. In a walk of about ten minutes, I counted several hundred chimneys, which were all at least that numbers of families had left behind them as memorials of their folly and the wickedness of their persecutors. When this city was in its glory, every dwelling was surrounded with a garden . . . but now all the fences are in ruin, and lately crowded streets actually rank with vegetation. Of the houses left standing, not more than one out of ten was occupied, excepting by the spider and the toad. Hardly a window retained a full pane of glass, and the doors were broken, and open, and hingeless.

Not a single laughing voice did I hear in the whole place, and the lines of suffering and care, seemed to be imprinted on the faces of the very children who met me in the way. I saw not a single one of those numerous domestic animals, which add so much to the comforts of human life; and I heard not a single song even from the robin and the wren, which are always so sure to build their nests about the habitations of man. Aye, the very sunshine and the pleasant passing breeze, seemed to speak of sin, sorrow, and utter desolation.

Yet in the center of this scene of ruins, stands the Temple of Nauvoo, which is unquestionably one of the finest buildings in this country. . . . It is said that the cost of this Temple was about $800,000. The owners now offer it for sale at $200,000, but it will be a long time, I fancy, before a purchaser is found.

The "Mormon" who took me over the Temple, and gave me the above information, was nearly heartbroken. Like the majority of his brethren remaining in the city, he was without money, and without friends, and yet it was to be his destiny, in a few days, to push his way into the wilderness, with a large family depending on him for support.

It was a most melancholy tone indeed, that he spoke to me the following words: "Mine, sir, is a hard, hard lot. What if my religion is a false one, if I am sincere, is it not cruel, in the extreme, for those, who call themselves the only true church to oppress me and my people as they have done? My property has been stolen from me, and my dwelling has been consumed; and now, while my family is dependent upon a more fortunate brother for support, my little children cannot go into the streets without being pelted with stones, and my daughters cannot go to the well after a pail of water, without being insulted by the young and *noble* among our persecutors.

"I do not deserve this treatment. I am not a scoundrel or a foreigner: — for, far from the truth is this supposition. My grandfather, sir,

was killed at the battle of Yorktown as an officer of the glorious Revolution; my own father, too, was also an American army officer during the last war; and all my kindred have been faithful to the upright laws of the government. . . . O, I love this sacred Temple, dearly, and it makes me weep to think that I must soon leave it to the tender mercies of the *Christian* world."

Thus far had this poor man proceeded when his utterance was actually choked with tears . . . and my own heart was affected by his piteous tale. . . . When I went forth from out the mossy porches of the "Mormon" Temple to journey deeper into the wilderness, I felt like one awakened from a dream.

The friendly statesman, Colonel Thomas L. Kane, visited the deserted city soon after the exodus. In a lecture before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania he later said of this forsaken city and its exiled builders:

It was a natural impulse to visit this inviting region. I procured a skiff, and rowing across the river, landed at the chief wharf of the city. No one met me there. I looked and saw no one. I could hear no one move, though the quiet everywhere was such that I heard the flies buzz, and the water ripples break against the shallow of the beach. I walked through the solitary streets. The town lay as a dream under some deadening spell of loneliness from which I almost feared to wake it, for plainly it had not slept long. There was no grass growing up in the paved ways; rains had not entirely washed away the prints of dusty footsteps.

Yet I went about unchecked. I went into empty workshops, ropewalks and smithies. The spinner's wheel was idle, the carpenter had gone from his work-bench and shavings, his unfinished sach and casing. Fresh bark was in the tanner's vat, and the fresh-chopped lightwood stood piled against the baker's oven. The blacksmith shop was cold, but his coal-heap and ladling pool and crooked water horn were all there, as if he had just gone off for a holiday. No work-people anywhere looked to know my errand.

If I went into the gardens clinking the wicket-latch loudly after me, to pull the marigolds, hearts-ease, and lady-slippers, and draw a drink from the water-sodden well-bucket and its noisy chain, or knocking off with my stick the tall, heavy-headed dahlias and sunflowers, hunted over the beds for cucumbers and love-apples — no one called out to me from any opened window, or dog sprang forward to bark an alarm.

I could have supposed the people hidden in the houses, but the

doors were unfastened, and when at last I timidly entered them, I found dead ashes white upon the hearths, and had to tread a tip-toe as if walking down the aisle of a country church, to avoid arousing irreverent echoes from the naked floors. On the outskirts of the town was the city graveyard; but there was no record of plague there, nor did it in any wise differ much from the Protestant-American cemeteries. Some of the mounds were not long sodded. Some of the stones were newly set, their dates recent and their black inscriptions glossy in the mason's hardly dried lettering ink. Beyond the graveyard, out in the fields, I saw in one spot hard by where the fruited boughs of a young orchard had been roughly torn down, and still smoulding embers of a barbeque fire that had been constructed of rails from the fence around it. It was the latest sign of life there. Fields upon fields of heavy-headed yellow grain lay rotting ungathered upon the ground. No one at hand to take in their rich harvest. . . .

In and around the splendid temple which had been the chief object of my admiration, armed men were barricaded, surrounded by their stacks of musketry and pieces of heavy ordnance. These challenged me to give an account of myself and why I had had the temerity to cross the water without a written permit from the leader of their band.

Though these men were generally more or less under the influence of ardent spirits, after I had explained myself as a passing stranger, they seemed anxious to gain my good opinion. They told the story of the dead city, that it had been a notable manufacturing and commercial mart, sheltering over twenty thousand persons; that they had waged war with its inhabitants for several years, and had finally been successful, only a few days before my visit, in an action fought in front of the ruined suburb; after which they had driven them forth at the point of the sword.

The defense, they said, had been obstinate, but gave way on the third day's bombardment. They boasted greatly of their prowess, especially in this battle, as they called it; but I discovered they were not of one mind as to certain of the exploits that had distinguished it, one of which, as I remember, was, that they had slain a father and his son, a boy of fifteen, not long residents of the fated city, whom they admitted to have borne a character without reproach.

A DEN OF THIEVES

Jewish historians have written of the fate that fell upon the temple in Jerusalem when the enemy took possession of the land:

And he (Antiochus) went up to Jerusalem with a great multitude. And he proudly entered into the sanctuary, and took away the golden

altar, and the candlestick of light and all the vessels thereof, and the table of proposition, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the little mortars of gold, and the veil, and the crowns, and the golden ornament that was before the temple. And he broken them all in pieces.

And he took the silver and gold, and the precious vessels; and he took the hidden treasures which he had found; and when he had taken all away he departed into his own country. And he made a great slaughter of men and spoke very proudly. And there was great mourning in Israel, and in every place where they were. And the princes and the ancients mourned, and the virgins and the young men were made feeble, and the beauty of the women was changed.

Every bridegroom took up lamentation; and the bride that sat in the marriage bed, mourned; and the land was moved by the inhabitants thereof, and all the house of Jacob was covered with confusion. . . .

And he fell upon the city suddenly, and struck it with a great slaughter, and destroyed much people in Israel. And he took the spoils of the city, and burnt it with fire, and threw down the houses thereof, and the walls thereof round about. And they took the women captive, and the children, and the cattle they possessed. — 1 Maccabees 1:22-34.

But not long after the king sent a certain old man of Antioch, to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers and of God; and to defile the temple that was in Jerusalem, and to call it the temple of Jupiter Olympius; and that in Gazarim of Jupiter Hospitalis according as they were that inhabited the place.

And very bad was this invasion of evils and grievous to all. For the temple was full of riot and revellings of the Gentiles; and of men lying with lewd women. And women thrust themselves of their own accord into the holy places, and brought in things that were not lawful. The altar also was filled with unlawful things, which were forbidden by the laws. And neither were the sabbaths kept, nor the solemn days of the fathers observed, neither did any plainly profess himself to be a Jew.

—2 Maccabees 6:1-6.

On the eve of the martyrdom when Governor Ford visited Nauvoo and condemned the Saints in his inflammatory speech against them, he was conducted through the temple. While Joseph and Hyrum Smith were being killed in Carthage, the governor was likely in the font room of the temple. The governor pointed to one of the stone oxen beneath the font and exclaimed, "this is the cow with the crumpled horn." Another affable voice interrupted, "that tossed the maiden all forlorn."

At this point an explosion of laughter rang through the basement rooms, and the governor's party made merry in the temple. With a hammer they broke off a few horns and took them away as souvenirs.

For a season a gang of mobbers took possession of the temple, making it their place of rendezvous. They carried into the beautiful new building their couches and beds, cots, tables, barrels of liquor, playing cards and other gambling devices with which to entertain themselves in the big building. At night they would play cards as they drank whisky and filled the rooms with tobacco smoke, while they cursed and profaned in the house of the Lord.

Since they did not make their habitation in the basement rooms they used the font as their lavatory, making it a foul-smelling cesspool. These impious intruders would play their games of chance far into the night, perhaps hurling their empty bottles against the freshly painted scenes on the smooth walls of the rooms.

Far into the night their drunken brawls continued in the house that was built for God. Men would climb to the belfry and ring the giant bell that had been purchased by the Saints in England and sent to Nauvoo. The silence of the City of Joseph was often broken by the tolling of the bell during the long night.

These brazen acts of profanity desecrated the sacred sanctuary during the summer months until the cold of autumn made it uncomfortable for them to linger in the new building with its large rooms and high ceilings. They continued to desecrate and defile the temple until the cold breath of autumn drove them from the building to their own homes beyond the city.

Inside the temple these wicked intruders set up what they called a "Judicature of Inquisition," before which many of the old, infirm Mormons were tried in a court that smacked of profanity and prejudice. Many of the faithful who were unable to leave the city because of their poverty were tried by this mock tribunal in the house of the Lord, many of them being con-

demned to be taken down to the river and baptized in the name of "old Joe Smith and the temple." Some were ordered to leave the city within two hours or they would be whipped severely, while others were rowed across the river, separated from their families and friends, and threatened with severe penalties if they ever returned to the city.

While the wicked made merry in the temple, considerable damage was done to the new building. Holes were cut in the floor with axes, the stone oxen were torn from their footings, their horns and ears broken off, while the font remained a foul cesspool. The names of some of the despoilers were scrawled on the beautiful, ornamental pillars and decorated panels. Not even the beautiful walls, enlivened by artistic scenes and pictures, escaped their vandal hands.

As a token of the brutality and profanity that plagued the few Saints in the deserted city, many items as the following crept into the records of the Church:

Charles Lambert was seized by these profaners who occupied the temple, and amid the swearing and cursing of one of them was baptized in the river. The wicked person who pushed him under the water, said these words as he immersed him, "by the holy saints I baptize you by order of the commanders of the temple." With words of profanity he demanded that the act be repeated a few times. As the poor, old man staggered to the shore, others were seized and given the same disgraceful treatment.

William Jewel was beaten unmercifully about the head and shoulders with clubs. He was then turned loose to wobble toward his home in a half-dazed condition. Two large dogs were turned loose and sent after him. They tore his arms and legs severely before they were retrieved and tied up near the temple.[2]

Elder James Ferguson visited the deserted city in the late autumn of 1846. In a letter to a friend he wrote these lines of discouragement and despair:

> I passed along the streets. They were desolate and forsaken. I looked

[2] *Journal History*, September 24, 1846.

around upon the orchards. Their fences were torn down and burned. I paused at the walls of the Nauvoo House. They were bare and unfinished. . . .

I visited the Temple. Here, at last, I thought, I could find comfort. I stood by the font, through whose sanctified waters the broken links of the past and the present were welded, and the living and the dead were united. But it was empty. It seemed but an urn that held the cold dead ashes of what had been.

I hurried from room to room in search of something, I knew not what, to cheer me up, but everywhere I met with disappointment. The altars where many a sacred vow had been pledged, were torn down or had vanished. The anointing oil had been removed. The veil of emblems had been folded away. The voice of praise was hushed. I withdrew, my spirit crushed and despondent.

I turned to look upon, and could not but admire the edifice. There was something about it still to love. Like the chieftain of a great tribe, who had struggled from infancy and defied the assaults of enemies and devices of traitors, and to win the last great battle and establish his empire, had willingly yielded his life. So it seemed to stand. Though the spirit that had given life to it had fled. And lovely and still tremendous in its death, it only awaited the stealthy coming of the coward worms that shrunk from it in life, and now could only slowly dissolve the empty shells.

And where were the priests who had administered at her altars? Where the presiding apostle whose prophetic voice had echoed around her walls and whispered life through the bellowing tempest? Where the congregation and the builders? They were gone. Only a few were left of the thousands who had worshipped here. . . .

I was not sorry that my stay was short among such scenes.[3]

While President Brigham Young was far away from the city of desolation and corruption, he wrote these lines to a friend who still tarried in Nauvoo:

Nauvoo is not the place for me any more till this nation is scourged by the hand of the Almighty, who rules in the heavens. This nation shall feel the heavy hand of judgment. They have shed the blood of prophets and saints, and have been the means of death of many. Do not think, Brother Joseph, I hate to leave my house and home. No, far from that. I am free from bondage at this time that Nauvoo looks like a prison to me. It looks pleasant ahead, but dark to look back.

[3] *Liahona*, January 20, 1914.

While the temple was still occupied by the mobbers, a newspaper said of the damage that had been inflicted on the beautiful new building:

> The damage done to the Temple is considerable. Some who have examined it say that less than $1,000 will not cover the damage. Holes have been cut through the floors; the stone oxen in the basement have been considerably disfigured, horns and ears dislodged and nearly all torn from their standing. Names have been chiseled in the wood engraving in the upward passage, in a very careless manner — clearly portraying the mechanical ingenuity and refinement of the authors.[4]

Until the cold breath of autumn drove the wicked plunderers from the temple, their profane acts were repeated by day and by night. A preacher who had joined them and was a guest in the temple would often ascend to the belfry and raise his voice against the builders of the city and the temple. He was often heard to say, "Who is the keeper of the Lord's house now? Peace, peace to the inhabitants of the earth, now the Mormons are driven out."

For weeks these intruders kept a six pound cannon stationed near the front door of the temple. Target practice was a common occurrence, the lusty boom of the war machine breaking the stillness of the sleeping city as it hurled balls of iron across the river.

Colonel Thomas L. Kane has left a vivid description of the desecration of the temple and the desolation of the city:

> They also conducted me inside the massive sculptured walls of the curious temple, in which they said the banished inhabitants were accustomed to celebrate the mystic rites of an unhallowed worship. They particularly pointed out to me certain features of the building, which, having been the peculiar objects of a former superstitious regard, they had as a matter of duty sedulously defiled and defaced. The reputed sites of certain shrines they had thus particularly noticed, and various sheltered chambers, in one of which was a deep well, constructed, they believed, with a dreadful design.
>
> Besides these, they led me to a large deep chiseled, marble vase

[4] *Hancock Eagle*, October 5, 1846.

or basin, supported upon twelve oxen, also of marble, and of the size of life, of which they told some romantic stories. They said the deluded persons, most of whom were emigrants from a great distance, believed their Deity countenanced their reception here of a baptism of regeneration, as proxies for whomsoever they held in warm affection in the countries from which they had come. That here parents "went into the water" for their lost children, children for their parents, widows for their spouses and young persons for their lovers. That thus the great vase came to be for them associated with all dear and distant memories, and was therefore the object of all others in the building to which they attached the greatest degree of idolatrous affection. On this account the victors had so diligently desecrated it as to render the apartment in which it was contained too noisome to abide in.

They permitted me also to ascend into the steeple to see where it had been lightning struck on the Sabbath before, and to look out, east and south, on wasted farms, like those I had seen near the city, extending till they were lost in the distance.

Here, in the face of pure day, close to the scar of Divine wrath left by the thunder bolt, were fragments of food, cases of liquor and broken drinking vessels, with a bass drum and a steamboat signal bell, of which I afterwards learned the use with pain.

I think it was as I turned from the wretched nightwatch of which I have spoken, that I first listened to the sounds of revel of a party of the guard within the city. Above the distant hum of the voices of many, occasionally rose the loud oath-tainted exclamation, and the falsely intonated scrap of vulgar song; but lest this requiem should go unheeded, every now and then, when their boisterous orgies strove to attain a sort of ecstatic climax, a cruel spirit of insulting frolic carried some of them up into the high belfry of the temple steeple, and there with the wicked childishness of inebriety, they whooped, and shrieked, and beat the drum that I had seen, and rang in charivaric unison their loud-tongued steamboat bell. . . .

There were, all told, not more than six hundred and forty persons who were thus lying on the river flats. But the Mormons in Nauvoo and its dependencies had been numbered the year before at over 20,000. Where were they? They had last been seen carrying in mournful trains their sick and wounded, halt and blind, to disappear behind the western horizon, pursuing the phantom of another home. Hardly anything else was known of them; and the people asked with curiosity, "What had been their fate — what their fortunes."

In November the mobbers left the city and returned to their own firesides. The Mormon brethren were delighted when

the keys of the temple were returned to them, but what a scene of destruction and profane abuse met their eyes as they wandered through the despoiled building! As returning missionaries and other members of the Church passing through the city, paused to breathe a prayer in the temple, they were amazed at the desolation that had plagued the city and the temple.

The vicious acts of vandalism and profanity, however, did not smother the spirit of Elijah that burned in the hearts of the Saints, nor did it put an end to their dreams of other temples in a land where they would be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor, not allowing the enemy to reap the harvest of their planting. Before the temple was finished some person wrote an article for the newspaper, an article which he titled, "One Hundred Years Hence." Though this was merely a fiction article, he asserted that at the beginning of the millennium there would be 125 temples in use by the Latter-day Saints. This statement disclosed the interest of the Saints in that absorbing subject and through the many years that interest did not diminish.

It was always a time of disappointment and a season of deep sorrow when any of the builders of Nauvoo returned to the deserted city and visited the temple. Typical of such comments is the following letter from Elder Jonathan C. Wright, written February 11, 1848:

> I contrasted those days of intelligence and peace, etc., with the present days of strife, deceit, drunkenness, fighting, theft, robbery, lying, whoredoms, Priestcrafts, etc., in short, every kind of abomination that maketh desolate some one or more of those ingredients to be seen in every visage you met, which is worn by these Latter-day Gadiantons (present inhabitants of Nauvoo — New Citizens) I say, when I contrasted the former with the latter, I wept and I could not help it.
>
> Brother Stewart and myself visited the Temple, went into the North-east upper room and we there called in solemn prayer unto the Lord to remember his Church and to remember his scattered Saints and scattered Israel and all the honest in heart, and bless them all from the president to the deacon, with disposition, spirit and means to gather speedily to the place that he had led his servants to the past season, even

in the valley of the Salt Lake and enable them to build another temple which will be acceptable to thee. . . .

Afterwards I called to see Madam Emma. She received me very coolly; she says she doesn't pity those who suffer there; they might have known better than to have gone, and many of them did know better, for she told them better and they knew she never told them a lie in her life. She says the first thing that Brigham teaches his followers is to lie well, etc.

The city had fallen into wicked hands, and the temple had been defiled in a shocking manner, yet the spirit of temple building and the mighty mission of Elijah were not to become casualties of the exodus. The smoke from the burning temple in Nauvoo would not smother the spirit of Elijah that had found sanctuary in thousands of hearts in the valleys of the mountains.

Chapter 12

THE TEMPLE DEDICATED

By the spring of 1846 most of the faithful members of the Church who had lived in Nauvoo were at the wayside stations in Iowa or at the rendezvous on the Missouri, except a few hundred of the aged and infirm who were reluctant to tarry longer in the deserted city. Fearful that the temple would never be rented or sold to some responsible or respectable society who would preserve and protect it, the brethren at Winter Quarters decided to dedicate the building to the Lord and leave it in his hands as they went on to found other cities and build other temples.

While President Young was contemplating the sale of the two temples they had built at Kirtland and Nauvoo, he assured his brethren that "when the time should come that they should return and redeem their inheritances, they would then redeem the temple also." After the vanguard of the pioneers was securely located on the Missouri and twenty-two thriving wards had been established there, it was decided to send a few of the brethren back to Nauvoo and dedicate the temple officially.

The Saints in Nauvoo had been told of the plan, and the newspaper in the deserted city published this account of the proposal:

> This splendid edifice is now completed, and will be dedicated to the Most High God on Friday, the 1st day of May, 1846. The services of the dedication will continue each day at 11 a.m. Tickets may be had at the watch house near the door of the Temple, and also at the office of the Trustees in trust at $1 each.
>
> One object of the above is, to raise funds to enable the workmen who have built the Temple to remove to the west with their families, and all who are disposed to see the Mormons remove in peace and in quietness as soon as circumstances will allow.

There is no occasion for excitement in this country respecting our removal. We shall more than fulfill our contract, covenant, or agreement respecting our departure, that we have made with our neighbors; and if an excitement is got up, it will not be got up because we have failed to fulfill any agreement on our part; but plunder of property and political aggrandizement may induce blood-thirsty and unprincipled men to engage in deeds of cruelty. We are disposed to let the world know the facts of the case, and leave all men in the hands of a just God to receive from His hands the fruits of their own doings.

Editors friendly to law and order, and to the rights of man, are requested to publish this.[1]

The brethren who returned for the dedicatory service — Elders Wilford Woodruff, Orson Hyde, John M. Bernhisel, and three of the brothers of Brigham Young, Joseph, John, and Phineas — were not unmindful of the fact that many mobbers were in the city and that with the state militia engaged in the Mexican War, there might be trouble from the reckless element that had moved into Nauvoo. For this reason the visiting brethren decided to hold a private dedicatory service the last night in April just in case the enemy should be on hand to prevent the public service that had been widely advertized.

There was a time in Missouri when an important meeting at the Far West Temple site had been announced, and the enemy declared that they would be on hand to see that the appointment was not kept. The Mormon brethren met in the dead of night and transacted their business while the enemy slept. In case such an emergency arose in Nauvoo on the first day of May, and the brethren were prevented from entering the temple, they could truthfully say that the sacred building had already been dedicated.

Thus, during the darkness of night the visiting brethren and a few of the local brethren quietly went into the temple and witnessed its private dedication. Elder Joseph Young offered the prayer of dedication in the presence of a few friends.

Elder Wilford Woodruff has written of this private service in the house of the Lord:

[1] *Hancock Eagle*, April 17, 1846.

In the evening of this day I repaired to the Temple with Elder Orson Hyde and about twenty other Elders of Israel. There we were all clothed in our priestly robes and dedicated the Temple of the Lord, erected to His most holy name by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Notwithstanding the prediction of false prophets and the threat of mobs that the building should never be completed or dedicated, their words have fallen to the ground. After the dedication, we raised our voices in a united shout of "Hosanna to God and the Lamb!" After offering our prayers we returned to our homes, thankful for the privilege enjoyed in our evening services.[2]

Into the church records went this account of the service:

Elder Joseph Young offered up the dedicatory prayer, dedicating the Temple and all that pertained thereto to the Lord, as an offering to Him as an evidence of the willingness of His people to fulfill His commandments and build His holy house, even at the risk of their lives, and the sacrifice of their labor and earthly goods. He prayed for the Twelve and all the authorities of the Church, and for the workmen that had wrought upon the Temple in the midst of persecution, want and suffering, and for the deliverance of the poor; that the Lord would direct the brethren of the camp of Israel, open the way before them to a place of his own appointment for the gathering of the Saints, that God would avenge the blood of his servants, the prophets and Saints who had been slain for the testimony of the truth, and mete out to the enemies of the Saints the same measure which they have meted out to them.

The following day the temple was officially dedicated, with not the slightest unfriendly gesture from the "new citizens" or the visitors from abroad. In the past, certain rooms and portions of the building had been dedicated as they were finished and made ready for use. First, the font room, then an altar when it was installed, then a complete floor. On a few occasions as President Brigham Young prayed in the temple he dedicated the building to the Lord, yet none of these benedictions were to be regarded as the official prayer of dedication until that historic day, May 1, 1846, when Orson Hyde presented the building to the Lord in a long prayer of dedication.

At this historic meeting an admission fee of $1.00 a person

[2]M. F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, p. 247.

was charged as a means of raising funds for the workmen who had continued to put the finishing touches on the new building even after the exodus had commenced and there would be no more endowments given in the sacred building.

The visitors from Winter Quarters tarried in the desolate city for a few days, spending the next Sabbath with the Saints who were unable to leave the city. The assembly room in the temple was filled at this Sabbath service when Elders Wilford Woodruff and Orson Hyde preached their farewell sermons to the congregation.

As the brethren departed from the city it must have been a season of sorrow and tear shedding, as they thought of the glorious past and dreamed of the future. Elder Woodruff recorded in his diary that as they crossed the river he took a final look at the City of Joseph, feeling that he would never see the place again. "I looked back upon the Temple," he wrote, "and the city as they receded from view, and asked the Lord to remember the sacrifices of the Saints."

During that service in the temple in the dead of night they must have sung some of the songs of Zion with tears in their eyes as they contemplated the precious building to be left in the hands of the enemy. As they recalled the fate of the Kirtland Temple they must have wept for fear that a similar fate would befall this sacred cathedral. It must have been as touching to sing the hymns of Zion on that dark night as it was for the Jews to sing their nation's psalms while they were captives in Babylon. Of this incident it has been written:

> By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
>
> How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.[3]

[3]Psalm 137:1-6.

With the dedication of the temple, the Saints had kept their pledge, and the coming of Elijah had not been in vain. The ministry of the Church in Nauvoo was at an end, and no endowments were administered in the new building after its dedication. The foundation work had been carefully laid, but the Saints must go elsewhere for the Church to triumph, as temples would multiply in the land and the spirit of Elijah would spread over all the earth.

Elder George Q. Cannon once said of the success that attended the Church following the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple:

> Let us reflect upon the wonderful deliverance that God has wrought out for us after we left Illinois. Up to that period, or up to the time that the temple was partly finished, and the blessings of God bestowed within its walls, our enemies to a very great extent had triumphed over us. We had been driven from place to place; compelled to flee from one town, county and state to another, but how great the change since then! We started out a poor friendless people, with nothing but God's blessing upon us. His power overshadowing us and His guidance to lead us in the wilderness; and from the day that we crossed the Mississippi River until this day — the 8th of April, 1871 — we have had continued success and triumphs. . . . God has done for us as He did for His ancient covenant people, when He caused the waters of the Red Sea to separate, that they might pass through and escape the destruction their enemies threatened.[4]

[4] *Journal of Discourses*, XIV, 125.

Chapter 13

THE TEMPLE IN FLAMES

This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and would you profane it thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing with hatred? Lo! where the crucified Christ from His cross is gazing upon you! See! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and holy compassion! Hark! how those lips still repeat the prayer, "O Father, forgive them!" Let us repeat it now, and say, "O Father, forgive them!" — Longfellow.

As Caesar burned his bridges lest his legions would dream of returning home, the torchbearers in Hancock County were anxious to wrap the temple in flame lest pilgrim feet from beyond the Rockies should be tempted to return to the City of Joseph. As long as that beautiful temple crowned the hill beside the majestic Mississippi, it might entice a return to the once holy city.

The Jews were slaves in Babylon for seventy years, yet when a friendly king arose who set them free to return to their home land, many of them made the long journey back to the land of their fathers. Though they had never seen the temple in Jerusalem, it was the main attraction in the Holy Land that beckoned them back.

The barn-burners in Hancock County wanted to remove all historic landmarks in Nauvoo that might tempt the builders of that mighty city to return. The "new citizens" who took possession of the deserted city even went to the burial grounds and carried away many of the headstones, using them for doorsteps and for other uses near their homes. As the weary months watched the exiles flee from the city of their dreams, leaving only a few of the aged and infirm in the city, the enemy dreamed of the day when they would destroy the temple and thus put an end to the temptation for the builders of Nauvoo to return to the city. They boasted of having enough gunpowder to blow the

temple asunder, proudly showing their prized possession to the prospective buyers of the temple when they came to the city to investigate the property they desired.

In the spring of 1846 the news reached St. Louis that "an attempt was to have been made yesterday by the anti-Mormons to blow up the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo with gunpowder."[1]

Only three days later another newspaper in the same city published this story:

A gentleman from Fort Madison informs us that numbers had crossed the river to augment the force opposite that place, and they make no hesitation in saying the Temple *must be destroyed.* One of them boasted that he could put his hand upon the powder that was intended to be used for this purpose. If foiled in that, they threatened to burn the town. They say that they will not interfere with the new citizens who join them, and assist in removing the obnoxious persons.

A gentleman direct from one of the invading camps informs us that it does not contain a man who has any property interest in the county. He believes that the threatened invasion is not so much directed against the Mormons as against the prosperity of this city; which, under favorable auspices, might prove a formidable rival in other towns. It is supposed, therefore, that there are men of influence behind the curtain, who stimulate the prejudice against all who have purchased property of the Mormons. As to the correctness of this understanding of the case we are not prepared to speak, but we have heard it asserted that "when the new comers purchased property here, they purchased the incumbrance of a risk of the town being destroyed."

It certainly seems strange that it should be necessary to make demonstrations of this kind against some few hundred Mormons, who are hurrying off as fast as possible. The few that are now here, are incapable of making a stand, and the new citizens apprehend no danger from them.[2]

Another newspaper circulated this information regarding the crisis in Nauvoo and the spirit of the anti-Mormons:

Our latest accounts from Nauvoo are to Saturday evening. At that time all was quiet, and the intended invaders had disbanded and dispersed; but it would seem that all fears of the citizens had not been allayed, for

[1]St. Louis *American,* June 12, 1846.
[2]*Daily Missouri Republican,* June 15, 1846.

a gentleman who visited the Temple on Saturday informs us that it was full of armed men, who had been quartered there for its protection; he says he counted three hundred under arms, and fears were still expressed that the Anties would attempt to destroy it. At night, he says, large fires are built upon the hill in order that the light might inform them of an approaching foe.[3]

Before the torch of the incendiary wrapped the new building in flame, the enraged elements had tried to put the sacred structure beyond the reach of unclean hands. Soon after the mob had taken possession of the building a flash of lightning had scarred and splintered the graceful shaft that reached above the belfry, bearing the figure of an angel.

Two days after the building had been closed for the endowment, the roof of the temple caught on fire from an overheated chimney. President Brigham Young saw the fire when he was a great distance from the building, and he quietly breathed a prayer to heaven as he said these words, "If it is the will of the Lord that the temple be burned, instead of being defiled by the Gentiles, Amen to it."[4] He rushed to the building as fast as he could and was happy to see that Willard Richards had organized a bucket brigade and the brethren rushed pails of water up the stairs and finally put out the blaze. A hole 16x10 feet had been burned in the roof.

One year before the temple was burned, the New York *Sun* said of it, "In after years their Temple, like the ruins of Palenque, may strike the beholder with wonder, and history may be unable to explain what race worshipped there."

Colonel Thomas L. Kane visited the temple after the mobbers had made it their place of rendezvous. As he witnessed the work of vandalism, he ascribed it to the Mormons who wished to keep the sacred furnishings from falling into the unworthy hands of the visitors. Regarding this incident he later wrote:

For that one day the temple shone resplendent in all its typical glories of sun, moon, and stars, and other abounding figured and lettered signs, hieroglyphs, and symbols; but that day only. The sacred rites

[3]St. Louis *Daily New Era*, June 22, 1846.
[4]*Journal History*, February 9, 1846.

of consecration ended, the work of removing the sacrosants proceeded with the rapidity of magic. It went on through the night; and when the morning of the next day dawned, all the ornaments and furniture, everything that could provoke a sneer, had been carried off; and except some fixtures that would not bear removal, the building was dismantled to the bare walls.

It was this day that saw the departure of the last elders, and the largest band that moved in one company together. The people of Iowa have told me that from morning till night they passed westward like an endless procession. They did not seem greatly out of heart, they said; but at the top of every hill, before they disappeared, were to be seen looking back, like banished Moors, on their abandoned homes and far-seen temple and its glittering spire.

During the summer of 1846, as the tardy groups of exiles moved from the deserted city, they carried with them the threats of the mobbers that they intended to burn the temple and perhaps destroy the city. A rumor spread through the city that a certain day had been set aside by the anti-Mormons to "blow up the temple." The Nauvoo police took special precautions to prevent this, but the enemy continued to predict that they would invade the city and kill anyone who would resist them.

A year later the "new citizens" were enraged because a few of the infirm Mormons were still in the city. Their indignation was increased to maddened frenzy when the rumor was spread among the enemy that the Mormons intended remaining in the far West for a few years, increasing their numbers by missionary zeal, and keeping their military organization well-trained and swelling its numbers by thousands. When they should become a mighty power to be reckoned with they would march back to Illinois and take possession of their former homes and expel the intruders from Nauvoo.[5]

The temple on the hill was a token of the Latter-day Saints, a symbol of Mormon industry and occupancy of the land, a fearful threat to the Mormon-haters that the builders of the city after a few years in the Great Basin, might return to reap a

[5] *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society,* December, 1947.

harvest of vengeance. The "new citizens" were anxious to take the temple out of the lives of the Mormons and take the Mormons out of the temple, so they insisted that no meetings be held in the building, threatening to tear the building down a stone at a time until one was not left upon another.

TONGUES OF FIRE STAB THE DARK NIGHT

Two and a half years after the first of the exiles fled from the city the terrible catastrophe occurred — the temple was destroyed by fire. The date of this act of infamy — October 9, 1848! About 3:00 o'clock in the morning the fire was discovered by some of the citizens, but so much of the building was ablaze at the time, and the fire spread so quickly that it was utterly impossible to save a fragment of woodwork in the new building. In a few hours every splinter of woodwork was destroyed, leaving only the charred, hot walls of stone standing naked on the hill.

The news of this frightful calamity spread like wildfire through the Illinois and Missouri hamlets where the news caused a spirit of rejoicing and merriment. It made headline news in many papers and soon became common knowledge in every section of America. The newspaper in Nauvoo, The Nauvoo *Patriot*, was the first one to tell the story of the fire, and that news item was published in many papers at an early date:

> Our citizens were awakened by the alarm of fire which, when first discovered, was bursting through the spire of the temple near the small door that opened from the east side to the roof of the main building. The fire was first seen about three o'clock in the morning and it had already taken such hold of the timber and roof that it was useless to make any effort to extinguish it. The materials of the inside were so dry and the fire spread so rapidly that a few minutes were sufficient to wrap the famed edifice in a sheet of flame.
>
> It was a sight too full of mournful sublimity. . . . Although the morning was tolerably dark, still when the flames shot upwards, the spire, the streets and the houses for nearly a mile distant were lighted up, so as to render even the smallest object discernible. The glare of

the vast torch, pointing skyward, indescribably contrasted with the universal gloom and darkness around it; and men looked on with faces sad as if the crumbling ruins below were consuming all their hopes.

It was evidently the work of an incendiary. There had been on the evening previous, a meeting in the lower room; but nobody was on the upper part where the fire was first discovered. Who it was and what could have been his motive, we have no idea. Some feeling infinitely more unenviable than that of the individual who put the torch to the beautiful Ephesian structure of old, must have possessed him. To destroy a work of art, at once the most elegant and most renowned in its celebrity of any in the whole west, would, we should think, require a mind of more than ordinary depravity; and we feel assured that no one in this community could have been so lost to every sense of justice, and every consideration of interest, as to become the author of the deed. Admit that it was a monument of folly and of evil, yet it was, to say the least of it, a splendid and harmless one.[6]

The *Millennial Star* reprinted this article, adding this paragraph: "Yes! This temple is destroyed; but this is not THE TEMPLE. We admire the good feelings of the Nauvoo *Patriot;* but even his conclusions are not correct. It was a monument of God's wisdom and not of man's folly."

A newspaper published in Keokuk, across the river from Nauvoo, said of the conflagration:

We regret to state that on the morning of the 9th Inst., the Temple of the Mormons at Nauvoo was destroyed by fire. However much the religion of the Mormons at Nauvoo may be condemned, every good citizen will condemn this act of incendiary as one of grossest barbarism. Situated on the bluff of the river, it commanded a prospect as far as the eye could reach and as lovely as the eye ever rested upon. Strangers from all parts of the country were attracted to the place, to see this monument of misdirected labor and religious error. A few years would in all probability have converted it into a temple of science. Its destruction has inflicted material injury on the Mormons — to the surrounding country, it will be a serious loss. The citizens on both sides of the river reprobate the act as wanton and malicious in the extreme. . . .

The flames which shot up to the sky . . . threw a lurid glare into the surrounding darkness. Great volumes of smoke and flame burst from the windows and the crash of the falling timbers was distinctly

[6]Reprinted in the Warsaw *Signal,* October 19, 1848.

heard on the opposite side of the river. The interior of the building was like a furnace, the walls of solid masonry were heated throughout by the intense heat. The melted zinc and lead was dropping from its huge blocks during the day. On Tuesday morning the walls were too hot to be touched. . . .

The naked walls still stand, a monument of the enthusiasm of its misguided worshippers — its destruction a striking comment on the spirit of the nineteenth century.[7]

The editor of a newspaper in Davenport, Iowa, was visiting in Nauvoo at the time of the fire. He related that the building stones had been calcined by the intense heat and rendered useless for building blocks. He commented on the stone oxen almost completely covered with ashes, mute tokens of the terrible heat that had devoured the last fragment of wood in the building.

Another paper published across the river from Nauvoo carried this message of censure:

The individual or individuals who planned this horrible outrage deserve to have the law in all its rigors enforced against them — aye, they deserve to have been confined within its walls while the conflagration was going on . . . (We hope) that the incendiaries may be found out and punished . . . but the prospect is a slender one.[8]

The "new citizens" became aroused, finally wanting to put an end to mob violence since it imperilled their investments. Their feelings were expressed in this news item:

We, the citizens of Nauvoo, feeling it is our indespensable duty to ferret out the nefarious incendiary who fired and burned the temple in this place, bind ourselves, our heirs and administrators to pay the sum set opposite our respective names to the person or persons causing the said incendiary to be arrested and legally convicted of the above charge.[9]

Forty-four representative citizens signed the above document. The total reward amounted to $640.00, but the culprit

[7] *Keokuk Register*, October 12, 1848.
[8] *Keokuk Dispatch*, October 12, 1848.
[9] Warsaw *Signal*, December 30, 1848.

was never captured, though he resided in the county, and many were convinced that Joseph Agnew was the guilty person. No one produced sufficient evidence to take him into court, though he was under suspicion until his death in 1870.[10]

WHO BURNED THE TEMPLE?

Lewis C. Bidamon, who married the widow of Joseph Smith, was one of the first to point the accusing finger at Agnew as the culprit who burned the temple. Bidamon reported on many occasions that a woman named Walker had told him as a deathbed confession that she had boarded at the home of Joseph Agnew at the time the temple was burned. Then with deep sincerity he related the following:

> The night the temple burned — that night the two Agnew boys drove off as if they were going to Queen Mills, which was several miles northeast of Dallas. She watched them. They drove to the southeast corner of the farm and there unhitched and left the wagon and rode off on horseback. About as long thereafter as it would take to ride from the farm to Nauvoo, a light of the burning temple was seen.[11]

The woman who made the confession to Bidamon died two hours after she had disclosed the information. Her confession made a deep impression on him, and he continued to relate the incident for many years. Bidamon also repeated to the curious guests who came to lodge or dine in the Mansion House after his marriage to the Prophet's widow, that it was common knowledge that a fund of $500.00 had been raised by popular subscription in the towns of Warsaw, Carthage, Portusuc, and other settlements nearby, and given to Joseph Agnew if he would set the building on fire.

Thus it was generally known within a few years of the tragedy who the fiend was who had burned the new building. His intimate friends who gave him the reward money and certainly knew of his guilt, guarded the secret well until after

[10] *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, December, 1947.
[11] Nauvoo *Independent*, August 15, 1890.

his death, before they would tell the full account of the wretched deed.[12]

Soon after Agnew died, the Peoria *Transcript* disclosed the fact that he was the wretch who had burned the temple. The *Deseret News,* April 26, 1872 reprinted the *Transcript* article:

THE MAN WHO FIRED THE NAUVOO TEMPLE—Among the events of the famous Mormon War was the burning of the Nauvoo Temple. The structure was burned in the night time, and so successful was the party engaged in its firing, that probably he was never suspected. The recent death of the incendiary, however, has removed the necessity of further secrecy, and a day or two ago we were put in possession of his name, and the facts connected with the burning of the temple, by the only living person cognizant of them.

The temple was fired by Joseph B. Agnew, who recently died in Appanoose Township, Hancock County, in this state, at the age of some fifty-eight years. It was always supposed that the party who burned the building had entered through the basement, but the facts are, Mr. Agnew surreptitiously obtained a key to one of the doors to the temple some time before the act. No one was engaged with him, and only four knew he was the party. Three of these are now dead.

Agnew prepared his fire-ball and other combustibles at his residence. Placing them in his saddle-bags, he rode on horseback to Nauvoo, and in the night entered the temple and fired them, and then quietly escaped the way he came. Our informant, who is a responsible and prominent citizen of the western part of the state, says he thinks he can produce the key of the temple which Agnew secured in order to accomplish his work.

With the temple destroyed, their greatest tourist attraction was gone, and business began to dwindle in the young city. In 1856 when Elders George A. Smith and Erastus Snow were visitors in Nauvoo, Lewis C. Bidamon told them that the burning of the temple "had the effect of diminishing the importance of Nauvoo." The tourists ceased to visit the city in large numbers, and the guests at the Mansion House were few in number after the temple was destroyed.

The "new citizens" had heard the rumors and threats that the temple must be burned, so now that they had possessions in the city they became deeply concerned about the safety of

[12] *Journal History,* October 9, 1848.

their investments. Just six weeks before the temple was burned they drafted a series of resolutions, including this one:

> Resolved, that we, the new citizens of Nauvoo, view the temple and other buildings belonging to the Mormon Church as ornaments to our city, in the preservation of which we feel a deep interest, and we pledge ourselves to the world that we are resolved to defend them against all illegal violence at the peril of our lives.[13]

Thomas Gregg in his *History of Illinois* had but a single paragraph about the burning of the temple:

> It was a beautiful night, and about 3 o'clock fire was discovered in the cupola. It had made but little head way when first seen, but spread rapidly, and in a very short period the lofty spire was a mass of flame, shooting high in the air, and illuminating a wide extent of country. It was seen for miles away. The citizens gathered around, but nothing could be done to save the structure. It was entirely of wood except the walls, and nothing could have stopped the progress of the flames. In two hours, and before the sun dawned upon the earth, the proud structure, reared at so much cost, an anomaly in architecture, and a monument of religious zeal — stood with four blackened and smoking walls only remaining.

The *Keokuk Gate City* many years later printed the following account regarding the culprits who were responsible for the burning of the temple:

> The Temple stood until the night of October 9th, 1848; then the people were awakened by the belfry blazing as a shaft of flame and in a few hours the Temple was a blackened ruin. Until within the last few weeks no authentic statement of the burning of the structure was ever made. Recently Mr. George H. Rudsill, formerly of Lee County, Iowa, now of Bowling Green, Florida, gave an account of the affair, told by J. B. Agnew, of Pontoosuc, Hancock County, Illinois, in confidence, only to be published when Agnew, the late Judge Sharp, of Carthage, and Squire McCauley, of Hancock County, who planned and carried out the destruction, should all be dead.
>
> This being the case now, Mr. Rudsill publishes Mr. Agnew's state-

[13] *Ibid.*, August 13, 1846.

ment. There were contentious rumors that the Mormons, repenting their emigration westward, would return to Nauvoo and the Temple to which their affections and prophetic hopes turned as Israel's to the temple at Jerusalem.

After some preliminary conferences, Judge Sharp, McCauley and Agnew met on the prairie a few miles from Nauvoo on the afternoon of October 9th, 1848, and pledged themselves to destroy the Temple. Hiding their horses about a mile from town, they walked in about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Agnew had put on as an undercoat a corn sack lined with combustible materials. About dusk they went to the Temple and got the steward to show them the building on the plea that they were strangers passing through and would have no other chance to inspect it.

After looking through they had to return without any chance to start the fire they had planned. After the janitor left them, Sharp and McCauley stood watch while Agnew ran back and kindled a blaze where he felt sure it would do its work without being seen until he and his associates had time to get out of town. Agnew said that he got lost in trying to get out of the building, and finally had to run through the room now aflame where the chief fire was in order to escape, getting badly scorched in doing so. Sharp and McCauley were waiting for him in growing anxiety and alarm at his absence. Now they scattered; Sharp to Carthage, sixteen miles away; McCauley to Appanoose, ten miles away; Agnew to Pontoosuc, twelve miles distant.

The latter had gone more than half a mile, when he saw a flickering glow in the belfry; a few minutes later it burst into a mass of fire. He put his horse into a run for the Mississippi River timber, where he hid, and shortly men began to dash along the roads riding swiftly for Nauvoo, for the conflagration could now be seen for twenty miles around. Agnew found himself so badly burned that he could not go home and he rode to McCauley's cabin, where he was a week before he was able to go out. Sharp spent the next night and the next day in the woods of Rock Creek, and went into Carthage the night of the 10th.

The one man who knew the story better than any others, was George Rudsill. As a boy he lived at Fort Madison, just a few miles from Nauvoo. He was a friend of some of the men who planned the destruction of the temple, but agreed not to divulge the facts until they had all died. His complete narration which follows, appeared in many newspapers soon after the principals in the case had died. This account was not published in the *Keokuk Citizen* until June 22, 1934:

Judge Sharp of Carthage, Squire McCauley of Appanoose and J. B. Agnew of Pontoosuc, Illinois were the men who planned and carried out the destruction of the Temple. These parties were well and favorably known in Hancock County, Illinois, and also in Lee County, Iowa, but have all since passed to that Temple above not made by hands but eternal in the heavens. This Temple was the heaven of Joseph Smith and the Saints of Nauvoo. . . .

Well, to return to the burning of the Temple, I will give it in Mr. J. B. Agnew's own words as near as I can recollect, which was just before his death in the fall of 1870. After telling me his story, he asked me as a friend not to let it be known until after the death of all the parties concerned, as they had pledged themselves secrecy in the matter. This I told him I would do. So now that these parties are all dead, it will do no harm to let it be known, and it will satisfy many an old settler's curiosity.

Mr. Agnew was in failing health at the time he came to me. He told me that he was going to die soon, which I thought was true. I asked him if he had repented of his wrong doings and he smiled and said, "Yes, all but one thing." I asked him what that one was and he said it was the burning of the Nauvoo Temple. Says I, "Did you do that?" and he said, "Yes, I did it with my own hands. Sit down and I will tell you all about it," which is as follows, as near as I can give it in his own words:

"The reason for our burning it was that there was continual reports in circulation that the Mormons were coming back to Nauvoo, and we were afraid that they might take it into their heads to do so, and as we had had all the trouble with them that we wanted, Judge Sharp of Carthage, Squire McCauley of Appanoose and myself of Pontoosuc, determined the destruction of their Temple and by so doing they would not be able to ever again try to come back.

"So on the afternoon of the night it was burned, in order to make arrangements, we three met on the prairie about five miles south of Fort Madison in Illinois, the Judge coming from Carthage, the Squire from Appanoose and I from Pontoosuc, and we met about where the Mormon church then stood, five miles south of Appanoose and there we pledged ourselves to destroy the Temple if it cost our lives.

"So we journeyed toward Nauvoo on horseback and on the way tried to perfect some plan to work on. After a while we decided to get the steward to show us through the Temple so we hid our horses in a secluded place, a mile from town, and walked in. We looked about town until 4 o'clock in the evening. I in the meantime had prepared a bundle of tinder by taking a corn sack and cutting the arm holes in the top so I could put it on under my coat like a coat. I then stuck in as many

tarred rags and sticks as I could carry without being noticed. I then put it on and secured some matches from a store to light my pipe and we were ready.

"We had but little trouble in finding the steward and after laboring with him for some time he at last consented to show us through, we claiming to be strangers in the country and were going away that night and it would be our last chance, perhaps, of ever having an opportunity to visit the Temple. So on these conditions he would oblige us, provided we would hurry, which we agreed to do as it was getting late and it would be dark before we got through. So after a good deal of delay, the key was at last inserted, it not seeming to fit, when the door swung open. We went in with a rush and kept going, the man was left behind working with the door. He called out for us to stop, but we kept on and I noticed that he left the door with the key in it. I stepped in a side room, and the other two kept on. The man ran on after them, and after he had passed me I went back to the door and unlocked it and put the key in my pocket, and then ran after them. By this time the man had discovered that I was missing, but when I came up to them, I explained that I had stopped to look at the crucifixion, but he looked suspicious at me and from that time on he kept right by my side and would not allow us to stop, but walked us right around and out.

"It was getting dusk and we had had no chance for me to light my fire and I saw that it was telling on my companions, that they were bitterly disappointed and we were compelled to walk out. I told them to come on, in haste, that we were late and would miss our boat that we were going away on, so they came along and we stopped behind a house where I told them what I had done, which made them two of the happiest fellows I ever saw.

"We had to watch but a few minutes until we saw the steward start away on a run, and we knew that he was going for a key or someone and that this was our chance. So leaving the Judge and Squire on guard, I ran back to the Temple. I started for the top which I soon gained and found a good place to start my fire where it would get a good start before it would shed any light to be seen from the outside. After seeing it start of a success, I began to retrace my steps with joy and a light heart for I was sure that the Temple was as good as burned, but I now saw that there was a good chance for me to burn with it, for I had lost my way and did not know which way to turn to get out, although I had been through the Temple a number of times before.

"I thought if I would succeed at last in getting out that I would be sure to be caught by the steward, for I was certain that he would

lay the missing key to us. You can imagine my feelings, being lost in a burning Temple and in case I did not escape the fire I was sure of arrest, and if arrested, some Mormon would be sure to kill me, so I became desperate. I ran first one way and then another in hopes of gaining some passage that I would know, so as to find my way out, but all to no purpose. I was getting worse lost all the time and I couldn't tell one direction from another and it was dark as an Egyptian night.

"At last I came to a stairway going up and I took it with the hope that it would lead me back where I had started the fire and I could then take a new start. After going up two pairs of stairs and through many halls I came to a square turn and a light shone way down a passage in the opposite direction from what I wanted to go, but I thought best to go and see what it was, and I soon discovered that it was my fire, which was burning at a fearful rate, sending its fiery tongues clear across the hall.

"I drew as near as I could and I happened to see Squire McCauley's bandana handkerchief lying on the floor a short distance from the fire on the opposite side of me, so I knew that my way led through the fire. Now what was I to do? Not knowing as it were what I did, I threw my coat over my head and made a dive through the hell of fire, striking my full length on the floor and I rolled over and over until I got out of reach of the fire. When I got to my feet, I took off my coat and extinguished the fire that had caught in the lining. After which I put it on again with difficulty as I tried to run for I had seriously hurt my arm and one of my legs from my fall on the floor. But I was so excited at the time that I did not realize the pain until afterwards.

"With the assistance of a few matches I had, that I now thought of, I kept striking them along my way and at last I reached the door that I had gone in and found it open instead of closed as I had expected. The Squire had come and thrown it open in hopes that I might be able to see a star from without. They were satisfied that something had happened on account of my delay. You can imagine our feelings when I stepped through the door. I pulled the door to and locked it and ran away in an easterly direction, the Judge and Squire following.

"I was sore, lame, and burned and almost choked, not being able to speak, and when I came to a well about one hundred yards away I drank and threw the key in the well. I then told the boys to scatter and go to the horses, which they did. They got there long before I did, for I was almost beyond going at all. After reaching the horses I told them that the job was done and for them to go in different directions and get home as soon as possible and avoid meeting anyone. They objected to leaving me as they were afraid that I was hurt internally, which I was fearful was the case. I had inhaled the fire and thought

my time had come. I told them to go, that I would pull through. So the Squire took the river route up the Mississippi to Appanoose, ten miles. The Judge going in a southerly direction to Carthage, which was about sixteen miles, and I going the prairie route in the direction of Pontoosuc, twelve miles distance. After going about one half mile I looked toward Nauvoo and I saw a flickering light and the next minute flames burst through the roof and lit up all the country for miles around. . . .

"I again tried to mount my horse, but found it impossible, and found that my leg had swollen so that I could not walk. I was in a fix sure enough. What to do I did not know, but I had to do something, so I got down on my hands and knees and began to crawl towards a clump of trees, leading my horse. When I arrived at the timber, I fortunately found a large tree which had been cut down leaving a high stump. I got up on the tree, then on the stump, and from there on to my horse, then went back, jumped my horse over the fence. . . ."

Newspapers from far and near lamented the loss of the beautiful temple. The *Burlington Hawkeye,* (Iowa), Oct. 10, 1848 expressed the belief that it was "the work of some nefarious incendiary," and that the "Temple should have stood for ages," and that "none but the most depraved heart could have applied the torch to effect its destruction." Similar expressions appeared in many of the papers far from Nauvoo.

On the other hand, the local papers were loud in their praise of the honorable citizen who had set the temple on fire, and praised its destruction as a noble act. Thomas Gregg censured the builders of the temple and praised its destruction as a benevolent act. He declared, "the four blackened walls of stone will stand a monument of the rise, progress and downfall of one of the boldest and most nefarious systems of imposture of modern times."[14]

The "new citizens" who had been so anxious to drive the last of the Mormons from the city, now lamented the fact that the temple had been destroyed. It put an end to a lucrative tourist trade in the deserted city and halted the investments of speculators who were solicited to move into the city and take

[14]Warsaw *Signal*, October 12, 1848.

possession of the empty houses and till the unworked farms near the city.

In the autumn of 1849, Dr. John M. Bernhisel visited the city he had helped build. His description of the desolation is typical of what happens to people and cities when the Church and its leaders are taken out of their midst. His letter to President Brigham Young contained this information:

Nauvoo presents a most gloomy and desolate appearance. The lots and streets, with a few exceptions, are overgrown with weeds and grass. Few of the houses, comparatively speaking, are inhabited. The remainder are in a state of desolation and utter ruin. Though the walls of the Temple are still standing, yet they are much cracked, especially the east one; and not a vestige of the once beautiful font remains. There had been nothing done to rebuild it, except clearing away some rubbish, and it is highly probable there will never be anything more done.

The Temple is enclosed with a rude fence, and is used as a sheep-fold and a cow pen. I was informed by a person who witnessed the conflagration of this sacred and magnificent building, that when the flames first burst out through the steeple, a most profound silence reigned over the devoted city, then the dogs began to bark, and the cattle to low.

The Nauvoo House remains in about the same condition in which it was two years ago. The appearance of the adjacent country is in perfect keeping with that of the city.

The character of the population was represented to me as being very bad, and growing worse. The Icarians, or French socialists, number two hundred and forty, all told, and it is more than probable that they will, ere long, be divided into the original elements, thirty-four having recently seceded.

Though Emma received me in the kindest, and entertained me in the most hospitable manner, yet she did not make a single inquiry in relation to the Valley, the Church, or any of its members. She has become quite corpulent. She has not united with the Methodist Church. Joseph has grown surprisingly, indeed so much that I did not recognize him. His little brothers have also grown rapidly.

Emma has employed a teacher, who is residing in the house, and is instructing the children. Joseph is studying English, French, and Latin. Julia, the adopted daughter of Emma, has been joined in the silken bands of wedlock to a reformed gambler named Dixon, who keeps the Mansion. Mother Smith's health is very feeble, and in all human

probability she will not survive another winter. She inquires after you and the others.[15]

A TORNADO BLOWS THE TEMPLE WALLS DOWN

A colony from France, under the leadership of Etienne Cabet, went to Nauvoo soon after the Mormons left the city, seeking the spoils of the exodus. They decided to rebuild the temple, but their work had scarcely started when a tornado swept through the area, tearing down some of the walls and seriously loosening some of the stones that remained standing. A part of two of the walls remained standing for a short time, but seriously dislocated. Community officials met the day of the tornado and agreed that the southern and eastern walls would soon fall down, so they would not attempt to rebuild the building, and in order to avoid any serious accident, "it was better to destroy them."[16]

The French colonists were heartbroken with this disaster. The Nauvoo *Patriot* carried a long account of the tragedy, expressing their disappointment in these words:

> The temple which we were preparing so actively and resolutely to rebuild . . . the temple which we hoped to cover this year, and in which we were to settle our refectories, our halls of reunion and our schools. The temple, that gigantic monument, which has become the first victim of the tornado.
>
> How many projects are buried under these heaps of rubbish! How much outlay and days of hard labor have been lost to us! It was for that magnificent edifice to again give a soul to that great body, that one of our agents in the north pineries has just bought all the great beams necessary for its rebuilding.

The lamentation should have reminded them of the heartbreak and utter despair that smote the hearts of the builders of the temple, when the beautiful structure was burned. While they mourned about the few days of labor they had wasted on the building, the builders of the temple were planning other

[15] *Journal History*, September 10, 1849.
[16] *Deseret News*, August 24, 1850.

temples far beyond the Mississippi and out of reach of the torch of the enemy. There was not much weeping in the valleys of the Rockies when it was learned that the walls had been blown down. The Saints had shed their tears in full measure when the temple was burned.

In fact, when President Brigham Young learned that the temple had been burned, he expressed his thoughts in these words:

> I would rather see it burnt up than see it in the hands of devils. I was thankful to see the Temple of Nauvoo on fire. Previous to crossing the Mississippi River, we had met in the Temple and handed it over to the Lord God of Israel, and when I saw the flames I said, "Good, Father, if you want it burned up."
>
> I hoped to see it burned before I left but I did not. I was glad when I heard of its being destroyed by fire, and the walls having fallen in, and said, "Hell, you cannot now occupy it." When the temple is built here, I want to maintain it for the use of the priesthood, which is our right privilege. I would rather do this than to build a temple for the wicked to trample under their feet.[17]

THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH TRIUMPHS

When the Kirtland Temple was defiled by the wicked and the Nauvoo Temple became a burnt offering, the spirit of Elijah did not perish in the flames nor did it become a casualty of the exodus from those two cities. The coming of Elijah would never be forgotten, his spirit and mission would never cease to be a powerful factor in the lives of the builders of the first two temples.

The flames that devoured every splinter of woodwork in the Nauvoo Temple did not burn the enthusiasm for the cause that burned in the hearts of the Saints. The spirit of Elijah was abroad in the land, far removed from the burning temple on the hill. His mission was a magnificent triumph that could not be silenced by the evil deeds of the wicked or be destroyed by the flames that devoured the majestic temple on the hill.

As the smoking muskets and the yelling mobbers at the

[17] *Journal of Discourses*, VIII, 203.

jail in Carthage did not put an end to the spirit of the restoration when Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred, the first two temples in the hands of the enemy did not kill the spirit of temple building or impede the spirit and mission of Elijah.

As the blood of martyrdom became the crowning glory of the Church, the blackened walls of the temple ruins became a token of other temples that would arise in many lands. As the blood of martyrdom that stained the floor of Carthage Jail and the well curb where the Prophet's choice vintage drained from his severed veins did not put an end to the mighty mission the lives of the martyrs were dedicated to, the spirit of Elijah was not to die in broken hearts or defiled temples.

From the burning timbers that blazed in the font room and blackened the stone oxen that held the font on their backs, arose visions and dreams of other temples where the torch-bearers would not tread and the hands of the ungodly would not dare to defile. The remembrance of sheep and cattle sheltered in the Kirtland Temple goaded its builders to plan and dream of building other temples where the builders would enjoy the fruits of their labor and would cease to sow that others might reap the golden harvest of their planting.

The flame and smoke that arose from that burnt offering on the hill in Nauvoo seemed to be a token to its builders that the labors of their hands had been accepted by the Most High. This burnt offering was comparable to the blood of the martyrs as an emblem of divine approval, not as symbols of divine rejection or Satanic triumph. As the captive Jews in Babylon were reluctant to sing the songs of Zion in the strange and foreign land, the Saints upon the plains and in the wilderness could sing the hymns of praise as they contemplated the erection of other temples in their western Zion. Their leaders were not unmindful for a moment of the destiny that lay ahead in the quest for genealogical records of ancestors and the desire to see temples multiply in the land.

President Brigham Young had caught the spirit of Elijah and was anxious to take his people to the far West where they

could build other temples. He had promised them that if necessary they could go into the mountains and give the endowment, using a stone as an altar. When they started building temples in Utah, he was anxious to follow the pattern set in Nauvoo and dedicate rooms as they were completed and not wait until the last nail was driven in the upper room or the last splash of paint was applied to the belfry before the important endowment could be given. As the St. George Temple neared completion he wrote in his diary:

> Our present intention is to go to St. George immediately after next October conference, dedicate that portion of the temple that is finished, organize the Priesthood, and commence to give endowments, baptize for the dead, etc.[18]

From the sermons and writings of President Young we catch the spirit and enthusiasm that burned in his heart regarding this important mission:

> You know the history of the one which we built in Nauvoo. It was burnt, all the materials that would burn, and the walls have since been almost entirely demolished and used for building private dwellings, etc. I would rather it should thus be destroyed than remain in the hands of the wicked. If the Saints cannot live as to inherit a Temple when it is built, I would rather never see a Temple built. God commanded us to build the Nauvoo Temple, and we built it and performed our duty pretty well. There are Elders present here today who labored on that house with not a shoe to their feet, or pantaloons that would cover their limbs, or a shirt to cover their arms.
>
> We performed the work and performed it within the time which the Lord gave us to do it in. Apostates said that we never could perform the work, but through the blessing of God, it was completed and accepted of Him. Apostates never build temples unto God, but the Saints are called to do this work.[19]

A wealth of historical data is gleaned from a sermon which President Young preached at the general conference of the Church April 6, 1853:

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[18] *Deseret News*, May 16, 1936.
[19] *Millennial Star*, XXV, 802.

Soon after the Church, through our beloved prophet Joseph, was commanded to build a Temple to the Most High, in Kirtland, Ohio, and this was the next House of the Lord we hear of on the earth, since the days of Solomon's Temple; for without a pattern he could not know what was wanting, any more than any other man; and without commandment, the Church was too few in numbers, too weak in faith, and too poor in purse to attempt such a mighty enterprise.

But by means of all these stimulants, a mere handful of men, living on air, and a little hominy and milk; the great Prophet Joseph, in the stone quarry quarrying rock with his own hands; and the few then in the Church following his example of obedience and diligence wherever most needed; with laborers on the walls, holding the sword in one hand to protect themselves from the mob, while they placed the stone and moved the trowel with the other, the Kirtland Temple — the second House of the Lord, that we have any published record of on the earth, was so far completed as to be dedicated.

And those first Elders who helped to build it, received a portion of their first endowments, or we might say more clearly, some of the first, or introductory, or initiary ordinances, preparatory to an endowment.

The preparatory ordinances there administered, though accompanied by the ministration of angels, and the presence of the Lord Jesus, were but a faint similitude of the ordinances of the House of the Lord in their fulness; yet many, through the instigation of the devil, thought they had received all, and knew as much as God; they had apostatized and gone to hell. But be assured, brethren, there are but few, very few of the Elders of Israel, now on earth, who know the meaning of the word endowment. To know, they must experience; and to experience, a Temple must be built.

Let me give you the definition in brief. Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell. . . .

Before these endowments could be given in Kirtland, the Saints had to flee before mobocracy. And, by toil and daily labor, they found places in Missouri, where they laid the cornerstones of Temples, in Zion and her stakes, and then had to retreat to Illinois, to save the lives of those who could get away alive from Missouri, where fell the Apostle David W. Patten, with many like associates, and where were imprisoned in loathsome dungeons, and fed on human flesh, Joseph and Hyrum, and many others. But before all this had transpired, the Temple at

Kirtland had fallen into the hands of wicked men, and by them polluted, like the Temple at Jerusalem, and consequently it was disowned by the Father and the Son.

At Nauvoo Joseph dedicated another Temple, the third on record. He knew what was wanting, for he had previously given most of the prominent individuals then before him their endowment. He needed no revelation, then, of a thing he had long experienced, any more than those now do, who have experienced the same things. It is only where experience fails, that revelation is needed. . . .

While these things were transpiring with the Saints in the wilderness, the Temple at Nauvoo passed into the hands of the enemy, who polluted it to the extent that the Lord not only ceased to occupy it, but He loathed to have it called by His name, and permitted the wrath of it possessors to purify it with fire, as a token of what will speedily fall on them and their habitation, unless they repent.[20]

Still unbowed and not prostrate with grief because of the loss of the first two temples, President Young attempted to cheer his people and encourage them in temple building activity, with these words:

We shall attempt to build a temple to the name of our God. This has been attempted several times, but we have never yet had the privilege of completing and enjoying one. Perhaps we may in this place, but if, in the providence of God, we should not, it is all the same.

It is for us to do the things which the Lord requires at our hands, and leave the result with him. It is for us to labor with a cheerful good will; and if we build a temple that is worth a million of money, and it requires all of our time and means, we shall leave it with cheerful hearts, if the Lord in his providence tells us to do so. If the Lord permits our enemies to drive us from it, why, we should abandon it with as much cheerfulness of heart as we ever enjoy a blessing.

It is no matter to us what the Lord does, or how he disposes of the labor of his servants. But when he commands, it is for his people to obey. We should be as cheerful in building this temple, if we knew beforehand that we should never enter into it when it was finished, as we would though we knew we were to live here a thousand years to enjoy it.[21]

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[20] *Journal of Discourses*, II, 31.
[21] *Ibid.*, I, 277.

When the St. George Temple was completed, President Young said of the blessings that would be received in it:

> We enjoy privileges that are enjoyed by no one else on the face of the earth. Suppose we are awake to this thing, namely, the salvation of the human family, this house would be crowded, as we hope it will be, from Monday morning until Saturday night. This house was built here in this place purposely, where it is warm and pleasant in the winter time, and comfortable to work, also for the Lamanites, and also for those coming from the south, and other places to receive their endowments, and other blessings.[22]

Later the president rejoiced about the completion of the first temple in Utah:

> I am so thankful we have completed our temple. It is the greatest blessing that could be bestowed upon us. I know of nothing that could equal it. But we are not satisfied with this one, we must hurry the building of another one, and thus another one and so on, and perform the great work that is required at our hands.[23]

The mission of Elijah and the building of temples were not casualties of the exodus from Ohio and Illinois. When our first two temples fell into the hands of the enemy, the spirit of temple work did not perish in the hearts of the Saints. The burning of the Nauvoo Temple did not put an end to the great program of temple building and temple service. Elijah inaugurated a mighty mission that the enemies of righteousness cannot stop.

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[22] *Ibid.*, XVIII, 304.
[23] *Ibid.*, XIX, 222.

Appendix

THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE DEFILED

When the voice of the enemy was heard in the land of Shinehah and the Saints were driven from Ohio, seeking a homeland on the borders of the Lamanites in the land where Adam had dwelt, their beautiful temple became a token of the spoils of victory, falling into unclean hands. The impious beneficiaries of the Mormon exodus from Ohio did not need a house of worship as large as the temple, so they used it as a barn.

They made a sloping driveway into the basement, using that large room as a shelter for the milch cows of the community during the winter months. There was no furnace or font in the basement of the temple, so the full basement room made a large and warm room in which to keep their cows during the cold months of winter. The floor joists are about six feet above the earthen floor, so there was ample room for many cows in the large room.

On the ground floor a series of pulpits had been erected in each end of the room. The Melchizedek Priesthood officials occupied the pulpits in the east end of the room, while the Aaronic Priesthood officials sat behind the pulpits in the west end. At some of the meetings in the temple the Aaronic Priesthood officials presided, so that it was necessary for the audience to face them.

For this reason they did not have the regular benches or pews in the auditorium, where the congregation was obliged to look in the same direction at all the meetings. Instead, they had a small backless bench about fourteen inches high upon which about a dozen adults could be seated. There were three rows of these seats across the room, with two aisles running the entire length of the room. Around each bench a small wooden

enclosure was built, nearly three feet high, against which the people in the congregation could rest their backs. The little benches could be easily moved, so that the audience could turn about and face the other direction by moving the bench against the other wall.

When the enemy took possession of the temple and sheltered their cows in the basement, they disposed of the small benches, burning them in their fireplaces at home if they had no other use for them. Canvas curtains had been lowered on rollers from the ceiling to divide the large room into four small classrooms. This material was taken from the temple and used in the various homes by the victors who made good use of the spoils.

On the end of each pew or enclosure was a door with a latch attached so that it could be closed when the bench was occupied with people. With the benches removed from the building, the small pews made suitable pens for sheep, and during the winter season their sheep were sheltered on the main floor of the temple. At lambing time several ewes shared the small enclosures. Hay and straw were piled high on the ornamented pulpits and upon the choir seats in each corner of the room.

Well might the Lord have inquired as did Samuel of old, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" For many winters the sound of sheep and cattle echoed through the plastered rooms of the temple on the hill in Kirtland.

As money changers had disgraced the Lord's house in Jerusalem, horsetraders and traffickers in sheep and cattle desecrated the temple in Kirtland. Profanity and cursing were likely heard every day within those once hallowed walls as the wicked husbandmen fed their flocks and cleaned out their pens.

The second story room was exactly like the one on the ground floor. The steep stairway made the room unsuitable for a shelter for sheep or cattle, so the furniture was torn out, the beautiful pulpits being used for fuel in the homes of the spoil-sharers. The large barren room was then used as a recreation hall. Dancing was a popular pastime in that large

room. Community parties of all kinds were held in that upper room as the sheep and cattle were sheltered in the rooms below. Small circus units often performed in the second story amusement room, as the congregation sat in chairs around the walls. Trained horses and other animals were taken up the steep stairway to perform before the boisterous crowd that had assembled to witness the spectacle in the house that had been built for God.

Mass meetings were held in that large room. At election time the politicians were made welcome there as the farmer folk gathered to hear them. They smoked cigars and drank whisky from their pocket flasks while the sheep bleated in the room below. In the house that still bore the Lord's name above the front door in large golden letters, the voice of merriment and laughter was heard on many occasions as the villagers assembled to dance or be entertained by visiting troupes from abroad. The feeders of the flocks were often heard swearing and profaning as they did their chores among the bleating sheep and lowing cattle after the temple had been converted into a barn.

As the bleating of sheep and the lowing of the cattle were heard near the court of the gentiles in the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, the noisy livestock made the Kirtland Temple a place of shocking mockery. It smacked of simony and sacrilege, as it smelled of the cow barn and the sheepfold.

Special dancers from afar performed on the low platform that had been erected in one end of the large room where the beautiful pulpits had stood. Preachers from camp meetings and revivals let their harsh voices be heard in the house that had been built for the Lord. Above the bleating of the sheep such itinerant preachers told of the God who filled the universe yet was devoid of a body that could be seen by mortal eyes.

The third story had been divided into five small classrooms. In that apartment the "School of the Prophets" had been held during the golden age of the Saints in that land. These classrooms became a suitable place for the children of the com-

munity to attend school, so for many years school was held in the abandoned temple. One boy from a neighboring hamlet who later became President of the United States — James A. Garfield attended school for a season in that historic building.

A generation ago John D. Rockefeller was financing the construction of a beautiful chapel in New York City. While visiting the Kirtland Temple he was so favorably impressed with the artistic window panel that separated the pulpits from the foyer, that he offered a large sum of money for the entire wall, wishing to place it in the elaborate chapel he was having constructed. Since the owners of the building refused to sell the desired panel, he was permitted to have a draftsman make a drawing of the entire wall, which he had reproduced in the new chapel.

After the exodus from Ohio a few members of the Church later drifted back there, and a small branch of the Church was established there for many years. Many apostates filtered into the Kirtland hills, hoping to build up the city as it was before the Mormon exodus. After the Mormons fled from the Kirtland hills, the thriving city became as deserted and as desolate as Nauvoo after the caravans of covered wagons stirred up the dust in the Great Basin.

In the autumn of 1842 the newspaper in Nauvoo published the following information about Kirtland:

Kirtland, Oct. 26, 1842

This evening brother Green preached in the Temple, from the 12th chapter of Revelation. . . .

Kirtland, Oct. 28, 1842

A meeting was held this day, in the house of the Lord. Brother Lyman Wight having commenced the subject of what it required to save an individual, and having addressed the people on the principles of faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, the two evenings previous, he again resumed the subject and read the 13th chapter of 1st. Corinthians. . . .

At the appointed time a great number of persons assembled not only to witness this very delightful and soul reviving spectacle of humble

obedience to the ordinance of baptism, but to become partakers in the joys which flow from cheerful obedience to the commandments of God. The sight was sublime and affecting; to behold both old and young flocking together and pressing forward to the liquid stream, so celebrated as a place of baptism by the Latter-day Saints. After this service was concluded the whole congregation repaired to the Temple where from five to seven hundred persons were soon assembled to hear the instructions of elder Wight, which were in strict accordance with the propositions he had previously made; in which the doctrines of baptism, charity, etc. were set forth in so clear and plain a manner that every heart was made glad. In the evening the church again met and were instructed by brother Wight after which the brethren, one after another arose, and so great was the manifestations of the spirit to the congregation, and so clear the evidence and testimony to every soul, that it seemed almost impossible to bring the meeting to a close without curtailing many in the privilege of bringing in a testimony concerning the blessing received by complying with the requirements of heaven; and by giving heed to the instructions of those whom God had sent to this meeting. In consequence of the uncommon degree of intelligence and power manifested it was more like those meetings enjoyed in times past, in the house of the Lord, than any since the church removed to the west. The next morning we again went to the water and many more came forward, some of whom were not baptised before; after this we went again to the Temple, where the conference sat agreeable to previous appointment. Oct. 31, 1842. . . .

Through the scene of this conference two hundred and three persons were baptised, and thirty elders ordained; eighteen children blessed; bread and wine administered to between two and three hundred, in full fellowship. We are now holding meetings every night, and shall do so as long as there is from three to ten coming forward a day, which is now the case. The people are preparing to come from Painesville, Cleveland, Chardon, and all the regions of country round about. We have no reason to doubt but that a great work will be done here, if the brethren in Nauvoo give us their prayers; for the brethren here truly give you theirs; for they are truly with both heart and hand in all things, and there will be much done here for both houses. Some who had entirely relaxed their intentions to do anything have concluded to go as high as a hundred dollars; and others would willingly give all they have if required. One woman, who at the commencement of the conference declared hereself good enough without re-baptism, has now come forward before the close and says that she would go to the Rocky Mountains if Joseph said so; and in fine, we are now in the midst of glory, and glorious times, and care not if it never ends. Amen and amen.

The members of the Church in Kirtland were able to use the temple as a meetinghouse for a season, while it was not being used as a barn by the villagers. The first week in April, 1843, a conference was held in the temple at which it was resolved that the Saints in that place should remove to Nauvoo. During the conference about one hundred apostates were baptized. Lyman Wight was the presiding officer at the conference.

On the last day of the year, 1844, the following letter was written in Kirtland and sent to President Brigham Young and the twelve in Nauvoo:

Kirtland, Dec. 31, 1844

Beloved Brethren: Inasmuch as an important crisis is at hand, in relation to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its future destiny, we the undersigned, feeling a great desire for the prosperity of Zion, feel it a duty to apprize you of the situation of the Church in this part of the Lord's vineyard. We have long looked for the redemption of Zion. Our eyes have failed for watching while those who have control over us here have caused us to weep and mourn.

Our beloved Prophet has found rest in the paradise of God; our Patriarch has finished his work and we now see a fulfillment of that which was told you last winter. The work, says Brother Joseph, rests upon your shoulders. Consequently, we appeal to you. There are in this place all kinds of teachings. Martin Harris is a firm believer in Shakerism. He says his testimony is greater than it was for the Book of Mormon. Luman Heath is running after them continually. Hiram Kellog, the presiding officer here is a Rigdonite and says Sidney is the man God has called to lead his people; that Brother Joseph was cut off for transgression, and the Twelve are carrying out his principles; and if we follow them, we shall all be cut off.

He is also an agent for the "Messenger and Advocate" printed in Pittsburg, and no pain is spared by him to circulate it among our worst enemies. He will take his seat in the holy desk and there dictate with unbounded sovereignty every person who attempts to speak, and then at the close of the service distribute the Rigdon papers.

Was this the first sign of apostasy in Hiram Kellog, we could bear with him for a while; but when our brethren were in prison in Missouri, he said it was by reason of the wickedness of Brother Joseph. These things are all proveable, and we felt in duty bound to lay them before you. We said we had long looked for the redemption of Zion. We still

look for that glorious day and feel to bear record that if we carry out the principles taught by Brother Joseph, we shall share in its triumphs, but we have a double portion at the present time in this place, for here we are called Josephites, and at Nauvoo apostates. The first we glory in, the latter we are willing to bear till our brethren have proven us faithful by seeing our faith and good works.

There are at this time some 40 or 50 good brethren in this place, which constitutes a majority of the Church here, and we are anxious to have them saved, if possible, but we are at our wits end having every kind of spirit to deal with; but we are favored with a house and the control of it. Old Burness had returned the keys to Brother Hiram Winters.

We would say in relation to tithing, we are willing to do all we can and intend to make out our tenth as early in the spring as possible, and forward it to the Trustees-in-trust for the building of the Lord's House that we may not be behind in any one thing.

We would say to our brethren, the Twelve, dispose of us as you think proper, and for you we will ever pray.

Phineas H. Young
Joseph Knight
Hiram Winters
Ira Tuft

This epistle disclosed the abject spiritual desolation that seemed to plague Kirtland after the exodus of the Saints. The same wretched fate awaited Nauvoo when its builders were driven from the state. Through the long and barren years many pilgrims returned to Kirtland as they traveled through the area. The *Contributor* in December, 1882, told of the visit of Richard W. Young to the deserted city. Since he and his companion were unable to locate the key to the building they were obliged to take turns standing on each other's shoulders and look through the broken windows of the despoiled building. He wrote of the locked temple:

We found the interior preserved in much the same order as described by veteran Saints, and saw above on the ceiling of the main room, the wires along which the curtains used to ride. The lower one of the three pulpits was strangely decorated with a few of the paraphernalia of a Protestant church, and held an open Bible. The building is in

poor repair; much of the interior woodwork has been taken away for firewood, and the sashes contain more broken than undamaged panes of glass. Paint it has not seen for a generation at least.

Another visitor to the deserted city of Kirtland, about the year 1875, wrote the following account:

The Kirtland of today is not that of forty years ago — merely the shadow. The hundreds of rude log houses that at one time covered the hills and valleys, like their inmates, have mostly disappeared. The hum of industry has departed, and only occasionally the clink of the hammer or the stroke of an axe may be heard where once all was alive with the noise of trade and manufacture. The aspect is one of general retrogression, and the home of a thriving colony is now the dwelling place of a few hundred souls who seem in appearance the fast dying remains of the lethargy which surrounds them.

The Mormon Temple, alone tells the story of the past. On an eminence facing the east, it rears its head in solemn dignity above the surrounding elevations and scattered wrecks of the buildings it has survived, a weather-stained relic of a former greatness — an inanimate Marius on the ruins of Carthage. Above the front entrances, which are reached by two flights of broad stone steps, the gilded inscription, "Built by the Church of Jesus Christ — 1836," still shines bright as ever, but the original appearance of the walls outside has been wrought upon materially by the wear and tear of the elements.

When the Mormons left Kirtland, the building fell into the hands of Grandison Newell, a bitter and active persecutor of the Church, who disposed of it for a few hundred dollars to another, who in turn disposed of it to someone else. It was purchased finally by Joseph Smith, the son of the martyred Prophet, in whose possession it still remains, being used as a place of worship by his followers.

These are called "Josephites," but call themselves "True Latter-day Saints," in distinction to the Latter-day Saints or "Mormons," of Utah, of whom they regard in anything but a spirit of brotherly kindness, as heretics who have wandered into the wilderness away from the standard of truth. President Young they call a usurper, and because he nobly shouldered the labors and sorrows of a down-trodden people, and pushed the work ahead under the most trying circumstances of its history, instead of letting it lay aside for sixteen years waiting for their jumping jack ideal to spring from his trap, consider him the personification of all that is bad.

The sect around Kirtland numbers but few, and are generally despised

by the other inhabitants, but whether deservedly or not I am unable to say. They oppose gathering and are scattered from Dan to Beersheba, the headquarters being in Plano, Illinois, where the leader now resides. . . .

All who come to Kirtland explore the Temple and register their names, a nominal fee being collected by the one who has charge of the premises. On the first floor, where the religious services are held, the walls are in a tolerably good condition. The two rows of pulpits with the letters designating the grades of the priesthood, face each other from the opposite ends of the apartment, and, excepting some of the seats, remain in *status quo*. The place is well furnished with seats and facilities for lighting up. The rollers on the lofty ceiling show that it was once divided by curtains, while everything betrays a beautiful economy and convenience of design and execution.

On the next floor, to reach which we returned to the hall and ascended a flight of stairs, the walls and scanty furniture are in a bare and shattered state. A placard informs us that this was once the "School of the Prophets," but is now used, when permission is given, for school exhibitions, temperance revivals, lectures, and other entertainments requiring a room of its size. A notice nailed to a pillar, after "impartial" and charitable (?) synopsis of Mormonism, and a slur on its leader, announces that "We (the Josephites) wish it distinctly understood that we are no part of the Latter-day Saints of Utah. We have nothing to do with them, (and yet the mighty work of conversion goes on) we are not Mormons.". . .

We now ascended to the third floor, went through a succession of small rooms containing crippled benches, blackboards, ruined walls, and other paraphernalia which indicated that at some period of the Temple's history this part had been used as a primary school.

After ascending to the belfry by a flight of steps in the last stages of delirium tremens, and taking a bird's eye view of the surrounding country, we descended to the office, registered our names and departed.

Some others of the old buildings associated with the early history of the Mormon Church, yet remain. Among these are the Kirtland Bank, now occupied by a private family, and Gilbert's and Whitney's old store, still used for original purposes and wearing a look as solemn and equivocal as a stepmother's invitation to dinner.[1]

After about fifty years of abuse, the Reorganized Church got possession of the temple at Kirtland and through the years have spent a vast sum of money in an effort to remove the gentile scars of defilement that marred this beautiful building. At the present time they have about 400 members in the area

[1]Salt Lake *Herald*, VI, 35.

who use the building as a meetinghouse. The ownership of that historic building, however, fails to give them a vision of the mission of Elijah and the reasons for building temples.

As far as they are concerned the words of Elijah in that historic house were simply wasted words, the mission of Elijah a mission of dismal failure. As far as they are concerned he might just as well have remained in heaven, as his commission to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery was a waste of time.

The builders of the temple in Nauvoo tasted for a short season the majesty and glory of the temple endowment, and have not ceased to make the mission of Elijah one of the most sacred assignments ever entrusted to mankind. The spirit of Elijah is abroad in the land, as thousands of the faithful have caught the spirit of his important mission and are engaged in genealogical research and temple work, while temples multiply in the land, even in foreign lands.

Hope, not despair, was kindled in the hearts of the Saints when their first two temples fell into the hands of the enemy. The labor of their hands perished as the flames consumed the woodwork in the Nauvoo Temple, but like the smoke that was radiated from that burnt offering, the spirit of Elijah spread over the earth, finding a hearty welcome in the hearts and homes of the Saints. This spirit was not quenched by the burning temple in Nauvoo, or by the neglected and defiled temple in Kirtland.

Well might Elijah exclaim as he witnesses the result of his holy mission, "Oh, Zion, thy past is full of glory, and thy future full of promise!"

Many prominent authorities in the field of architecture have visited the Kirtland Temple and have been thrilled with its beauty and the brilliance of its design. Typical of what has been said on this subject we quote from the renowned Thomas E. O'Donnell, A.I.A., Professor of Architecture, University of Illinois:

> As to how and to what extent architect, builder, and artisan contributed to make Smith's "vision" a reality, little is known. . . . Considering

the period, the inadequate facilities of the early settlers, and the lack of funds, it is remarkable that such an edifice should have been erected. Religious zeal and inspiration, no doubt, were largely responsible for the fine result.

The finish was all prepared by hand, on the premises. Some interesting accounts are given us as to methods employed, one of the most unusual being that oxen were used to draw the large planes used in fluting the casing members of the eight wood piers in the main auditorium.

The most distinctive feature of the Temple is the plan, the number and the arrangement of the pulpits being unique in every respect. It is here this . . . temple differed from all other religious edifices in the world. The form and arrangement were dictated by the ritualistic ideas instituted by Joseph Smith, and a study of the plan, which is here presented in measured drawing, will show that the temple had little in common with the usual church edifice.

The most interesting features of the interior are the pulpits, especially the two in the main, or temple, auditorium. They are the most distinctive features of the whole building, and because of their design and architectural details are worthy of special attention. There are two groups of pulpits in the main auditorium one at each end of the room, representing the two priesthoods of the church, viz., the Melchisedec and the Aaronic. Each of these is divided into four sections, to represent the four grades of presiding officers, and each section contains three seats, for the officer and his two counselors. Thus we have twelve pulpits in one — the number being symbolical of the number of disciples. The pulpits are elevated and terraced, and are made accessible by flights of steps. At either side of the pulpits are elevated box-pews, at a slightly lower level than the pulpits, and intended for minor officials or missionaries of the church. These are entered, not from the pulpit steps, but by means of separate doors and steps from the main aisles. The whole ensemble is most pleasing, piling up in a majestic manner, and when filled with church dignitaries must have presented a stately appearance to the worshipers.

The pulpits are highly ornamented with hand-carved work, and are unusual both in design and in combination of details. The craftsmanship is excellent in every respect; and although neglected for half a century, they are today in a fine state of preservation. The two groups of pulpits are identical except for the initial inscriptions which indicate the rank of the various members of the two priesthoods. The drop leaf of the front section of each of the pulpit groups, and the handrails of the step railing, are of native black-walnut wood, stained dark, but the balance of the pulpits is finished with native white wood, painted white.

The paneling, moldings, and carving on the pilasters show refinement of line and careful execution. The chief carved ornament used is the guilloche, known to us from the time of the Greeks, and a favorite motive during our Greek Revival period.

The names of the designer and the craftsmen who executed the beautiful interior work of the temple will probably never be known. Of this we may be sure; they were not only craftsmen of unusual skill, but were inspired artisans working in the same spirit as did the builders of the great cathedrals in medieval times.[2]

On the eve of the exodus from Nauvoo the brethren could not forget how their first temple had been plagued and defiled by the enemy. They were so determined to keep the Nauvoo Temple from falling into the hands of the enemy that they sought to sell or lease the building as a means of protecting and preserving it. Their efforts in this field, however, were completely wasted. A far worse fate overtook the Nauvoo Temple, but from the smoking ruins of the burned temple there arose visions of greater temples to be built in the future in many lands.

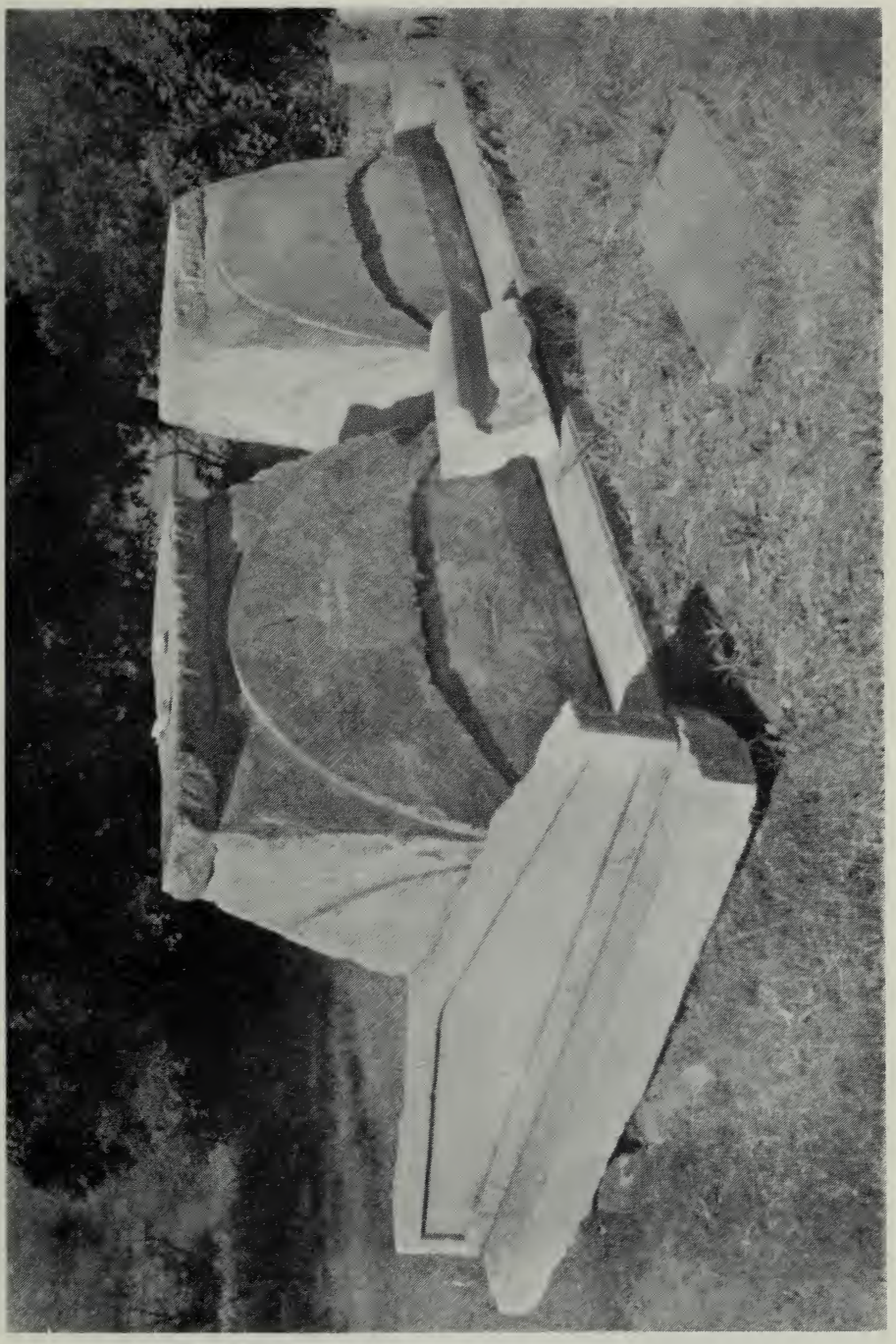
[2] *Architecture*, August 1924.

Photographs Courtesy George Strebel and
Church Historian's Office.

THE TEMPLE ON THE HILL

THE TEMPLE IN RUINS

ONE OF THE SUNSTONES OF THE TEMPLE

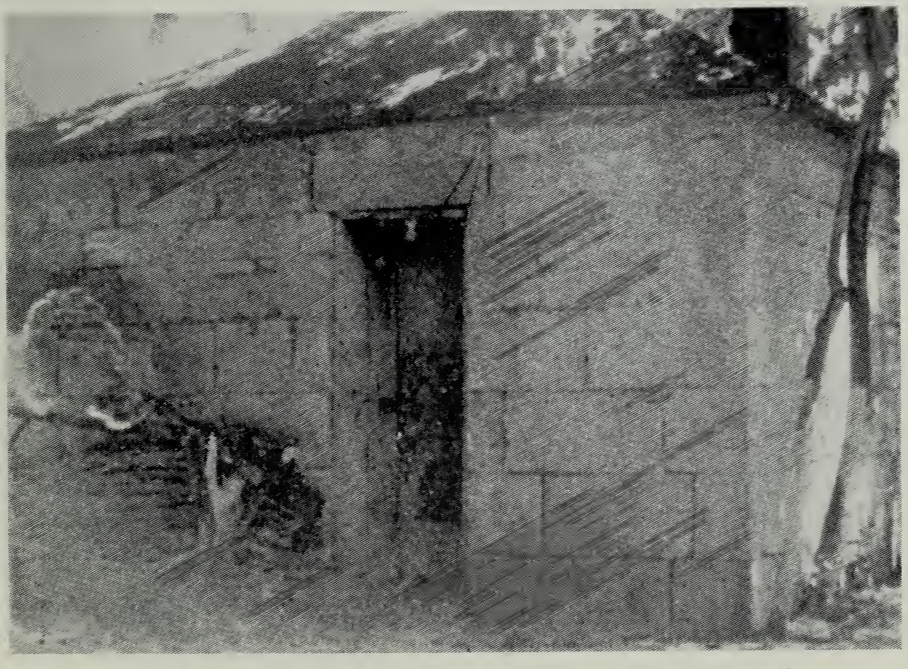


TWO OF THE MOONSTONES OF THE TEMPLE

THE FRENCH ICARIANS BUILT THIS SCHOOL BUILDING
WITH STONES FROM THE TEMPLE

TEMPLE STONES WERE USED IN MANY BUILDINGS

THE TEMPLE BELL



THE NAUVOO JAIL BUILT FROM TEMPLE STONES

AN ARTIST'S SKETCH OF THE NAUVOO TEMPLE

THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE

THE INTERIOR OF THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE

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